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Substance and Shadow:

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OR MORALITY AND RELIGION
IN THEIR RELATION TO
LIFE: AN ESSAY UPON
THE PHYSICS OF
CREATION.

BY

HENRY JAMES.

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THE INTRODUCTION.

THE leading words of my title-page call for a precise definition, in order that the reader may clearly discern the aim of the discussion to which I invite his attention.

By morality I mean that sentiment of selfhood or property which every man not an idiot feels in his own body. It is a state of conscious freedom or rationality, exempting him from the further control of parents or guardians, and entitling him in his own estimation and that of his fellows, to the undivided ownership of his words and deeds. It is the basis of conscience in man, or what enables him to appropriate good and evil to himself, instead of ascribing the former as he may one day learn to do exclusively to celestial, the latter exclusively to infernal influence. The word is often viciously used as a synonyme of spiritual goodness, as when we say, "A is a very moral man," meaning a just one; or, "B is a very immoral man," meaning an unjust one. No man can be either good or evil, either just or unjust, but by virtue of his morality; *i. e.* unless he have selfhood or freedom entitling him to own his action. This is a *conditio sine quâ non.* The action by which he

becomes pronounced either the one sort of man or the other could not be his action, and consequently could never afford a basis for his spiritual development, unless he possessed this original moral force, or strict neutrality with respect to heaven and hell; but would on the contrary be an effect in every case of overpowering spiritual influence. We should be very careful, therefore, not to confound the condition of an event with the event itself, as we do when we call the good man moral, and deny morality to the evil man. For if the good man alone be moral, while the evil man is immoral, then morality ceases to be any longer the distinctive badge of human nature itself, which separates it from all lower natures (so furnishing a platform for God's spiritual descent into it), and becomes the mere arbitrary endowment of certain persons. The error in question originates in, at least is greatly promoted by, our habit of calling the decalogue "the moral law." As the law is instinct with an ineffable Divine sanctity, we get at last to think that the word which we so commonly couple with it partakes of right the same sanctity, and accordingly call only the man who obeys it moral, while he who disobeys it is immoral. In point of fact, however, morality means nothing more nor less than that state of natural neutrality or indifference to good and evil, to heaven and hell, which distinguishes man from all other existence, and endows him alone with selfhood or freedom. Thus the term properly designates our natural

majority or manhood, what every man, as man, possesses in common with every other man.

By religion I mean — what is invariably meant by the term where the thing itself still exists — such a conscience on man's part of a forfeiture of the Divine favor, as perpetually urges him to make sacrifices of his ease, his convenience, his wealth, and if need be his life, in order to restore himself, if so it be possible, to that favor. This is religion in its literal form; natural religion; religion as it stands authenticated by the universal instincts of the race, before it has undergone a spiritual conversion into life, and while claiming still a purely ritual embodiment. It is however in this gross form the germ of all humane culture. Accordingly we sometimes use the term in an accommodated sense, *i. e.* to express the spiritual results with which religion is fraught rather than the mere carnal embodiment it first of all offers to such results. Thus the apostle James says: Pure and undefiled religion (*i. e.*, religion viewed no longer as a letter, but as a spirit), is to visit the fatherless and the widow, and keep oneself unspotted from the world (*i. e.*, has exclusive reference to the life). We also say proverbially, handsome is that handsome does; not meaning of course to stretch the word handsome out of its literal dimensions, but only by an intelligible metonomy of body for soul, or what is natural for what is spiritual, to express in a compendious way the superiority of moral to physical beauty. My reader will

always understand me, then, as using the word religion in its strictly literal signification, to indicate our ritual or ceremonious homage to the Divine name.

Now morality and religion, thus interpreted, are regarded on my title-page as concurring to promote the evolution of man's spiritual destiny on earth.

Man's destiny on earth, as I am led to conceive it, consists in the realization of a perfect society, fellowship, or brotherhood among men, proceeding upon such a complete Divine subjugation in the bosom of the race, first of self-love to brotherly love, and then of both loves to universal love or the love of God, as will amount to a regenerate nature in man, by converting first his merely natural consciousness, which is one of comparative isolation and impotence, into a social consciousness, which is one of comparative omnipresence and omnipotence; and then and thereby exalting his moral freedom, which is a purely negative one, into an æsthetic or positive form: so making spontaneity and not will, delight and no longer obligation, the spring of his activity.

But morality and religion are further regarded on the title-page as bearing, in the evolution of the spiritual destiny of man on earth, the relation respectively of substance and shadow. It only remains that I explicate this point, in order to put in the reader's hands the clew to my entire thought.

A shadow is a phenomenon of vision pro-

duced by some body intercepting the light. Thus the shadow of the tree upon the lawn is an effect of the tree intercepting the sun's rays. My shadow on the wall is an effect of my body intercepting the rays of the candle, and so forth. Evidently then three things concur to constitute a shadow: 1. a light; 2. an opaque body which drinks up or refuses to transmit its rays; 3. a background or suitable plane of projection on which such refusal becomes stamped. Thus the shadow which anything casts is strictly proportionate to its power of absorbing the light, or appropriating it to itself: which is only saying, in other words, that the shadow of a thing is the exact measure of its finiteness or imperfection, *i. e.* of its destitution of true being. And this remark prepares us to ask what purpose the shadow serves, what intellectual use it renders.

Obviously the use or purpose of shadows is to attest finite substance, or separate between phenomenal and real existence. Real existence is that which exists in itself, being vitalized from within. Phenomenal existence is that which exists only by virtue of its implication in something not itself, being vitalized wholly from without. In short real existence is spiritual; phenomenal existence natural. So far as I am spiritual, that is, to all the extent of my æsthetic or spontaneous life, I am a real existence, possessing life in myself. So far as I am simply natural, that is, to all the extent of my instinctual and voluntary life, I am a phenome-

nal existence, deriving my life from without. My spiritual manhood consequently casts no shadow. Whatsoever I do spontaneously; whatsoever I do in obedience to the inspiration of Beauty; whatsoever I do, in short, from individual taste or attraction in opposition to the common instinct of self-preservation; is good and beautiful in itself, is positively or infinitely good, as being without any contrast or oppugnancy of evil. But my physical and moral existence never fails to project a shadow. Let me be as beautiful physically as Venus or Apollo, still I am not really or positively, but only actually or apparently, so; as by contrast with some opposite ugliness. Let me be morally as good as all saints and angels, it is yet not a good which is positive or stands by itself, but one which stands in the opposition of evil. In short, my beauty in the one case, and my goodness in the other, is finite; and like all finite existence claims its attendant and attesting shadow.

Clearly, then, the purpose of shadows is to attest finite or imperfect existence, existence which does not involve its own substance. The shadow which the tree casts upon the lawn, and that which my body projects upon the wall behind me, are a mute confession on the part of body and tree that they are purely finite and phenomenal existences: that while they sensibly appear to be in themselves, their being is yet in something very superior to themselves. Seek this tree a few years hence, and you will find no vestige of it remaining. Ask for this body a

few months hence, possibly, and it will be indistinguishable from the dust of the earth. This is what the shadow invariably says: — that the substance which projects it is a mere appearance to the senses, not a reality to the philosophic understanding; and that if we would penetrate the world of realities we must transcend the realm of sense, the finite realm, and enter that of mind or spirit.

We now fairly discern the constitution of the shadow, and what is its rational scope and significance; and are thus prepared to interpret the greatest of shadows which we call Religion, and which falls everywhere across the page of human history darkening the face of day, turning the fairest promise of nature to blight, undermining the most towering pride of morality by a subtle conscience of sin, and forbidding man to content himself with a righteousness, a peace and a power which shall be anything less than Divine.

The reader recalls the constitution of the shadow, namely, that it is always an effect of some opaque body intercepting the rays of light. Thus the shadow which the tree projects upon the lawn is an effect of the tree intercepting the sun's rays; and the shadow of my person on the wall an effect of my body intercepting the rays of the lamp. In like manner precisely this stupendous shadow designated by the name of Religion, is an effect produced by our moral consciousness intercepting the rays of the Divine Truth as they shine forth from

man's social destiny. The three elements which determine its constitution as a shadow are thus distributed: History being the sole field of its projection; Morality the opaque substance which alone projects it; and the Social principle, the principle of a perfect society fellowship or brotherhood among men, being the great Divine light, of whose obscuration by morality religion has always been at once the shadow and the scourge.

So much definition seems due by way of preface in vindication of the title of my book, or in order to apprise my reader that I regard Religion and Morality as respectively shadow and substance in their relation to the social development of the race. Society—fellowship—equality—fraternity, whatever name you give it, is the central sun of human destiny, originating all its motion, and determining the pathway of its progress towards infinite Love and Wisdom. Morality and Religion together constitute the subject-earth of self-love which revolves about this centre, now in light now in shade; morality being the illuminated side of that love, religion its obscured side; the one constituting the splendor of its day, the other the darkness of its night. Morality is the summer lustihood and luxuriance of self-love, clothing its mineral ribs with vegetable grace, permeating its rigid trunk with sap, decorating its gnarled limbs with foliage, glorifying every reluctant virgin bud and every modest wifely blossom into rich ripe motherly fruit. Religion is the icy winter which blights this summer fertility, which arrests the ascent of its

vivifying sap, and humbles its superb life to the ground, in the interests of a spring that shall be perennial, and of autumns bursting with imperishable fruit. In other words, religion has no substantive force. Her sole errand on earth has been to dog the footsteps of morality, to humble the pride of selfhood which man derives from nature, and so soften his interiors to the reception of Divine Truth, as that truth stands fulfilled in the organization of human equality or fellowship.

The backbone of morality has long been providentially broken. The moral force men once had, the power of controlling natural appetite and passion, has abated, and in its place has come a sense of God's presence in Nature, and the aspiration to realize in life the infinite Beauty which she reveals. Almost no one is now strong by himself, strong against the floods of natural arrogance and cupidity which are sure to assail him, but only by association with others. Scarcely any one resists the temptation to which he is naturally prone on religious grounds, or from a sentiment of reverence to the Divine name, but only on social grounds or from a sentiment of what is due to good-fellowship. The failure to see this great change in human nature, and to organize it betimes in appropriate institutions, is what keeps us in this state of public and private demoralization, which has at last resulted in the downfall of our political edifice. See what thorough-paced unconscious scoundrels we have long had for politicians. Observe how apt

our men in office are to lend themselves to atrocious jobbery; how incessantly public and private trusts are betrayed; how our clergy in such large numbers habitually emasculate and stultify the gospel, in order to adapt it to the dainty ears of the fierce worldlings who underpin their ecclesiastical consequence; how ostentation, unbridled luxury of every sort, and the shameless apery of foreign class-pretension, even down to the decorating our imported servants with imported liveries, are corrupting us from our original democratic simplicity; how rapidly immodesty, dissipation, insolence, and the most unblushing egotism are vulgarizing the manners, hardening the visages, and hopelessly blasting the hereditary remains of innocence of our rich young men and women; — and who can doubt that Jeff Davis, Joe Smith, filibuster Walker, secretary Floyd, James Buchanan, and all the other dismal signs and portents of our current political and religious life, have been only so many providential scourges sent to devastate and consume a world long ripe for the Divine judgment?

The only possible explanation of the existing crisis in human affairs, everywhere indeed, compatible with the Divine sovereignty, is, that the moral force in man no longer subserves the great spiritual uses which once sanctified and sweetened it; that the mission which was once Divinely given it of nurturing men for the skies has been revoked and put in more competent hands. This to my judgment is as plain as any-

thing can well be. The moral force was never anything but a scaffolding for God's spiritual house in the soul; it was never designed to give permanent substance but only temporary form to God's finished work in human nature; and when accordingly it ceases to look upon itself in this subordinate plight, and insists upon being treated not as the scaffolding but as the house, not as the mould but as the substance to be moulded, not as the matrix but as the gem, in short, not as an accessory but as a principal, it loses even this justification and becomes a positive nuisance. The social sentiment, the sense of a living organic unity among men, is accordingly fast absorbing it or taking it up into its own higher circulation, whence it will be reproduced in every regenerate æsthetic form. Art is the resurgent form of human activity. The artist or producer is the only regenerate image of God in nature, the only living revelation of the Lord on earth. Society itself will erelong release her every subject from that responsibility to his own material interests which has hitherto degraded human life to the ground, and by providing for his honest and orderly physical subsistence, leave his heart and mind and hand free to the only inspiration they spontaneously acknowledge, —that of infinite Goodness, Truth, and Beauty. This most profound and intimate life of God in our nature is groping its way to more and more vivid consciousness in us every day; and the consequence is that we see the proud old Pagan ideal of moral virtue, a virtue which inheres in

the subject himself as finitely constituted or differenced from all other men, giving place to the humble and harmless Christian ideal of a purely spiritual virtue in man, a virtue which inheres in him only as he becomes infinitely constituted, or united with all other men, by the unlimited indwelling of God in his nature. The Pagan goodness proceeds upon self-denial, and hence implies merit. The Christian goodness proceeds upon the frankest and fullest possible self-assertion, and hence implies boundless humility or gratitude. "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts."

As the shadow obeys the law of the substance, so religion is bound to undergo a proportionate modification with that of morality. This is why religion in the old virile sense of the word has disappeared from sight, and become replaced by a feeble Unitarian sentimentality. The old religion involved a conscience of the profoundest antagonism between God and the worshipper, which utterly refused to be placated by anything short of an unconditional pledge of the utmost Divine mercy. The ancient believer felt himself sheerly unable to love God, or do anything else towards his salvation, were it only the lifting of a finger. To un-love was his only true loving, to un-learn his only true learning, to un-do his only true doing. The modern religionist is at once amused and amazed at these curious archæological beginnings of his own history. He feels towards them as a *virtuoso* does

towards what is decidedly *rococo* in fashion, and not seldom bestows a word of munificent Pharisaic patronage upon them, such as the opulent Mr. Ruskin dispenses to uncouth specimens of early religious Art. He has not the slightest conception of himself as a spiritual form inwardly enlivened by all God's peace and innocence. On the contrary, he feels himself to be a strictly moral or self-possessed being, vivified exclusively by his own action, or the relations he voluntarily assumes with respect to human and Divine law. The modern believer aspires to be a saint; the ancient one abhorred to be anything but a sinner. The former looks back accordingly to some fancied era of what he calls conversion: *i. e.* when he passed from death to life. The latter was blissfully content to forget himself, and looked forward exclusively to his Lord's promised spiritual advent in all the forms of a redeemed nature. The one is an absolutely changed man, no longer to be confounded with the world, and meet for the Divine approbation. The other is a totally unchanged one, only more dependent than he ever was before upon the unmitigated Divine mercy. The one feels sure of going to heaven if the Lord observes the distinctions which his own grace ordains in human character. The other feels sure of going to hell unless the Lord is blessedly indifferent to those distinctions.

I might multiply these contrasts to any length, but my desire is only briefly to indicate how very near and intimate God's spiritual approxi-

mation to our nature must have become, in order to justify those hopes of the purely natural heart towards him. It is impossible to go to the —— Church in ——, and observe how skilfully and yet unconsciously the gifted minister of that parish appeals to all that is most selfish and most worldly in the bosoms of his hearers, in order to build them up a fragrant temple for the Divine indwelling, without feeling one's heart melt with adoration of the Infinite Love which is taking to itself at last the riches of the earth, and making the kingdoms of this world also forever its own. In short, both the world and the church from having been very dense are becoming almost transparent masks of God's ineffable designs of mercy to universal man, and are helping along in their blind delirious way the speedy advent of a scientific human society or brotherhood upon earth. If accordingly my reader discover as he conceives in the progress of my book any *animus* of hostility either to the polite or the religious world, he will do me the justice to believe that such appearance is only the negative or literal aspect of a love, which on its positive or spiritual side embraces universal man.

Let me indeed insist on this justice. It is evident enough throughout my book, of course, that I assail ritual or professional religion with undissembled good-will; yet it is quite equally evident, I hope, that I never for a moment do so in the interest of irreligion, but exclusively in the interest of its own imprisoned spirit.

Daily I visit this sepulchre in which the Lord lay buried. I find the spiced linen garments in which he was embalmed reverently exhibited, and the napkin that was about his sacred head tenderly folded away and cherished; but no familiar feature of his vanished form remains; he is indeed no longer there but risen. All that was late so helpless in him has become glorified and triumphant; all that was late so human and finite has become Divine and infinite. I find, in other words, any amount of literal or personal homage addressed to Christ in the church; but never a glance that I can discern of spiritual recognition. And yet this alone is real and living; all the rest is dramatic and dead. Let us call him Lord! Lord! as much as we please, and lift up the devoutest possible eyes to some imaginary throne he is supposed to occupy in the super-celestial solitudes; we are utterly inexcusable for so doing, since if we believe his own most pointed and memorable counsels, (Matthew xxv. 31–46,) he is no longer to be found spiritually isolated from, but only most intimately associated with, the business and bosom of universal man: that is to say, only wherever there is hunger to be filled, thirst to be slaked, homeless want to be housed, nakedness to be clad, sickness to be relieved, prison-doors to be opened.

No doubt the church will answer that a man's soul is worth more to him than all the world beside; that God busies himself with the spiritual interests of humanity rather than its material

interests. Unquestionably. But how if He cannot deal directly with its spiritual interests without impairing them? How if His only safe way of dealing with them, is to do so indirectly, that is, by means of its material interests? Of course no reasonable man can doubt that God's real and primary delight is to appease the spiritual wants, and assuage the spiritual woes of humanity, which are accurately symbolized under these images of mere material destitution and distress. But then we must recollect that He is utterly unable to effect these ends save by the mediation of his own truth, or in so far as our private individual commerce with him has been organized upon, and energized by, a previous recognition of his boundless presence and operation in human nature itself. God's private mercies to us, in other words, do not prejudice, but on the contrary irresistibly exact or presuppose, this grander public operation of His, this stupendous work of redemption which he has practised in our very nature itself, as the basis of their own vitality. Let me elucidate this proposition a little.

Whatever be the Lord's unmistakeable goodwill towards the spiritual or immortal conjunction of every individual soul of man with himself, it is nevertheless evident that such a result to be permanent can never be forced, but must conciliate in every case the legitimate instincts of the soul, which are freedom and rationality. If God would have my love and have it eternally, he must exhibit his perfect worthiness to

be loved in such a way as to take captive my heart and understanding. Now as naturally constituted, or when left to myself, I am a being of consummate selfishness and covetousness. I unconsciously exalt myself above all mankind, and would grasp, if that were possible, the riches of the universe. It were obvious and unmixed deviltry simply to condemn this natural make of mine, or turn it over to ruthless punishment. It is, on the other hand, unmixed divinity to condescend to these natural limitations, to come down to the level and breathe the atmosphere of these overpowering lusts, to live in the daily and hourly intimacy of their illusions, their insanities, their ferocities and impurities, until at length by patiently separating what is relatively good in them from what is relatively evil, and then subjecting the latter to the unlimited service of the former, the two warring elements become bound together in the unity of a new or regenerate natural personality, in which interest will spontaneously effect what principle has hitherto vainly enjoined; or self-love accomplish with ease what benevolence has only been able hitherto weakly to dream of accomplishing. If now we appeal to the word of God, which is Christian doctrine, this is precisely what God does; and if we appeal to his work, which is the history of Christendom, the response is equally full and clear. Revelation and History both alike proclaim with unmistakeable emphasis that God chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak things to confound

the mighty, and base things and things which men despise, yea and things which are not, hath God chosen, to bring to nought established things, in order that no flesh should exalt itself in his presence.

This alone is why I love God, if indeed I do at all love Him. I hate Him with a cordial hatred — of this at least I am very sure — for his alleged incommunicable infinitude, for that cold and solitary grandeur which my natural reason ascribes to Him, and which entitles Him, according to the same authority, to exact the endless servile homage of us poor worms of the dust. For all this difference between God and me as affirmed by my natural deism, — which is my reason unillumined by revelation, — my crushed and outraged affections writhe with unspeakable animosity towards him. It is only when I read the gospel of his utter condescension to my foul and festering nature, and discern the lucent lines of his providence in the world illustrating and authenticating every word and tone of that gospel, — it is only, in other words, when I see how sheerly impersonal and creative his love is, *i. e.*, how incapable of regarding itself and how irresistibly communicative of its own blessedness to whatsoever is not itself, to whatsoever is most hostile and repugnant to itself, that my soul catches her first glimpse of the uncreated holiness, and heart and head and hand conspire in helpless, speechless, motionless adoration.

In short, no one can love God simply by wishing to love Him, still less by feeling it a

duty to love Him. At this rate one could never love his fellow-man even, but would come at last infallibly to hate him. In other words, love is never voluntary but always spontaneous. Its objective or unconscious element invariably controls its subjective or conscious one. I love my wife or child not by any force of my own, but by virtue altogether of a force which their innocence and sweetness lend me. It is their natural or cultivated grace which empowers me to love; abstract this, and I should be impotent as a clod. So also I can never love God by any force of my own. His absolute worth indeed makes it even more impossible for me to love Him, than my wife's or child's relative imperfection makes it impossible for me to love them: namely, by removing Him spiritually to such a distance from me as to make hatred rather than love towards Him, an instinctive dictate of my own self-respect. If then I can never hope to love God by my own force, He himself must enable me to love Him. How shall He do this without overpowering my conscious freedom or rationality? Why simply by taking upon Himself the conditions of my nature, or coming to know experimentally how irresistibly prone the finite mind is by the mere fact of its finiteness to lie, to steal, to commit adultery and murder, in order that, being thus tempted like as we are, yet without sin—being thus touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and yet rigidly self-debarred from the actual disorder in which they are sure to terminate with

us—He may give them totally new and unexpected issues in harmony with His own universality of love and providence. In other words, let God reveal Himself to my intelligence as a natural man, as a sympathetic partaker of my own corrupt nature, not with any view as my natural reason alleges to condemn and denounce it, but only to purify and exalt it to the measure of His own infinitude, and I shall necessarily love Him, love Him with such a reality and intensity of love as reconciles me even to my past natural animosity, and fills me moreover with His own unspeakable tenderness towards the possible natural animosity of all mankind.

This briefly stated is all I mean by saying that our private or individual regeneration is wholly conditioned upon a great and sincere work of redemption accomplished by God in human nature; so that every really regenerate person, every one reconciled in heart to the Divine ways, feels himself an unlimited dependent upon the unbought Divine mercy, and scorns nothing so cordially as the pretence of a superior personal sanctity in the Divine regard, to that of the veriest reptile that shares and illustrates his nature.

And this will also explain to the reader why, in the progress of my book, I have felt myself called upon to deal so frankly with our ritual or professional religion. It is because religion as an institution no longer subserves the great human uses which once alone consecrated it, but has sunk into an impudent canonization of

the vulgarest private and sectarian pretension. It has so completely renounced its ancient and purely typical sanctity, and challenges nowadays such an absolute prestige, or prestige in its own right, to men's regard, that the veracious public witness it once bore to the truth of all men's equal and utter personal alienation and remoteness from God, has become degraded into the lying testimony of some A, B, or C's individual regeneration and salvation. From a sincere record of our universal natural destitution and despair, it has sunk into a flattering witness of our private wealth, of our strictly individual assurance or presumption. The distinctively spiritual or human substance which alone sanctifies religious aspiration and saves it from blasphemy, is humility, is an unaffected contrition on the part of the worshipper for the pride and rapacity which he perceives underlying his finite consciousness, and forever separating him from the Divine. In short, a conscience of death is the sole legitimate flower of the religious experience; death to every cherished pretension the worshipper feels of ever being personally any purer better holier in the Divine sight than any criminal that ever was hung.

Scarcely a vestige of this most ancient truth survives in our modern profession; or if it does, survives in chronic not in acute form. To "experience religion," or "become converted," means now not what it once meant, to pass from the noon-tide radiance of natural force and self-confidence into the grimmest midnight of spirit-

ual impotence and self-distrust, but all simply to jump from a grossly absurd fear of God's personal enmity to us grounded on our moral delinquencies, or perhaps our purely ritual uncleanness, into a more grossly absurd hope of His personal complacency towards us, based upon some inward mystical change which He himself has arbitrarily wrought in us. Thus viewed, religion no longer witnesses to the truth of God's immutable perfection, but only to the capricious operation of His spirit ordaining certain differences in human character, whereby one man becomes avouched in his proper person an heir of heaven, another stigmatized as a child of hell. Look at the social consequences of this most real but unrecognized spiritual buffoonery, how inevitably it depresses all that is sweet and modest and unexacting in manners, and forces into conspicuity whatsoever is forward, ungenerous, and despotic. Look at any of our ecclesiastical coteries, and observe how torpid grows the proper spiritual or human force of its members, while every shabbiest pattern of a formalist is radiant, twittering, and alert with preternatural activity. No doubt very many of the clergy are personally superior to their office, and feel their instinctual modesty outraged by the spirit of servility and adulation which it appears to have the faculty of eliciting on the part of their adherents. But how can they help themselves? Professional religion means the claim of a private sanctity, of a strictly personal and individual worth in

God's sight, by which the subject is eternally differenced from other men; and the clergy are the protagonists or defenders each in his sect of this debased state of the public mind, so that to be personally flattered and cockered and excused and apologized for out of all reasonable shape of manhood, by precisely the style of people whose opinions they least value, seems above all things their just official Nemesis or retribution. In a spiritual point of view the clergy are most real martyrs to their perilous calling.

As to the attitude of the Divine mind towards the separatist or Pharisaic portion of the world, *i. e.* towards those who are identified with the outward profession of serving Him, the New Testament leaves no doubt on that subject, but ratifies every instinct of our proper humanity. The parables of the Prodigal Son and of the Publican and Pharisee praying, justify every prevision of common sense in the premises. Surely if I have a family of children the eldest of whom is alone legitimate, and therefore alone entitled to my name and estate, while all the younger children are bastards, and consequently destitute of all legal righteousness, I should be a worm and no man, if, while according to the former his fullest legal consideration, I did not bestow my tenderest and ripest affection and indulgence upon the latter. If my acknowledged heir, conceiving himself prejudiced by this action on my part, should grow angry and reproach me thereupon, saying, "Lo! these many years do I serve thee, neither have I

ever transgressed thy commandments, and yet thou hast never given me the slightest expression of thy heart's delight, such as thou art now lavishing upon those others who have wasted thy substance with riotous living:" this strain of remonstrance would only prove how essentially incompatible legal or literal heirship is with spiritual heirship; how infinitely short the most faultless moral righteousness falls of inward or spiritual innocence; but it would never prove me unrighteous. Nothing could be easier for me than to show my dissatisfied and envious offspring that I had at all events done him no injustice. I should say, "My son, I leave it to yourself to estimate the claim which the service you boast of exerts upon my heart, now that your shameless inhumanity to your less fortunate brethren reveals even to your own eyes the spirit which has always animated that service; a spirit of unlimited self-seeking, of low prudence or worldly conformity, befitting indeed the elder son (or head), but totally alien to the temper of the younger son (or heart). The service you render I am sure of at all times [*son, thou art ever with me*], because it is an interested service, prompted by your self-love alone. It is the homage of the proud self-righteous rapacious head, and though I have no power and no desire to balk its legal expectations [*and all that I have is thine*], it yet awakens in my bosom no emotion of pleasure, begets no throb of gratified paternal affection. It is the homage of the heart exclusively, the prodigal, unright-

eous, unexacting heart [*I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants*] which opens up the responsive fountains of my heart, which satisfies the hunger and thirst of my paternal bosom, and irresistibly compels therefore every answering outward demonstration of my inmost pride and joy, of my exquisite spiritual delight and blessedness. You shall have accordingly your legal deserts to the utmost, all that you have bargained for; all that I outwardly possess shall be yours, while I bestow myself, all that I inwardly am, upon your humbler brethren."

Thus much I feel called upon to say to the reader by way of forewarning, or in order that he may observe that I do not quarrel with the living spirit of religion, which glows in every breast of man where God's own spirit of humility, meekness, equality, fellowship, is cultivated and reproduced however feebly; but only with what the best men in history have always quarrelled with, namely, its dead and putrid body which still goes unburied and taints God's wholesome air with its baleful exhalations. Religion disdains any longer a literal or ritual establishment. It claims a purely living and spiritual embodiment, such as flows from God's sanctifying presence and animating power in every form of spontaneous human action. It has no longer anything to do accordingly with churches or with clergy, with sabbaths or with

sacraments, with papacy or with prelacy, with Calvin or Socinus; but only with a heart in its subject of unaffected love to all mankind, and unaffected fellowship consequently with every person and every thing however conventionally sacred or profane, that seeks to further that love by the earnest distaste disuse and undoing of whatsoever plainly withstands perverts or abuses it.

AN ESSAY

ON THE

PHYSICS OF CREATION.

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning!

If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy!

Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones. — PSALM CXXXVII.

AN ESSAY

ON THE

PHYSICS OF CREATION.

CHAPTER I.

MANY of my friends have at various times asked me to give them a brief statement of my views as to the practical bearing of Swedenborg's writings upon the intellect. As I understand the request, they do not care to have a mere recapitulation of Swedenborg's intellectual principles, for these are palpable to sight on every page of his books: they simply seek to know what judgment I, who hold these principles to be rationally indisputable, feel myself compelled to form with respect to their practical operation in the realms of speculation and action.

Judgments of this nature must vary of course according to the various temper and culture of the persons who render them. Truth is always modified to its subject by his own states of life: *i. e.* by the attitude of his heart towards Good. What is grapes to one intelligence is thistles to another, and the bramble bush of one spiritual latitude is the fig-tree of its opposite. To the

pure God shows himself pure; to the froward he shows himself froward. "A man receives," says Swedenborg, "only so much as he either has of himself, or makes his own by looking into things for himself: what exceeds these limits passes off."[1]

Interpreting Swedenborg's general relation then to the intellect by the effect his books produce upon mine, I should say that their direct tendency was, to assert and vindicate such an intimate Divine presence and operation in the lowest depths of consciousness, as will erelong practically obliterate all those superficial differences in human character upon which our social legislation has been hitherto exclusively based, by spiritually shutting up all men—good and evil alike—to a dependence upon God so vital and absolute, as to make the pretension of independence a mark of spiritual idiocy and death.

Let me explain. Human society—what little of it at least the exigencies of Priest and King, of church and state, have permitted to get body or become visible—has been organized in all the past upon the belief of a radical diversity in human nature, a fundamental distinction among men of good and evil. Society has not been content to affirm that one man was good and another evil, as they stood severally related to herself, that is, to human progress. She has declared them to be absolutely good or evil, *i. e.* good and evil in themselves, irrespective of their relations to any third thing.

[1] Arc. Cel., 3803.

The good man has always been thought to be good in himself, absolutely good, and thus even more sure of attracting the Divine complacency than ours. The evil man, the liar, thief, adulterer, murderer, has always been regarded as essentially, or in himself, a worse man than he who refrains from these odious practices. And society accordingly in rewarding the one and punishing the other, as the law of self-preservation has hitherto bound her to do, has apparently never doubted that she was performing a work of absolute righteousness, permanently consonant with the Divine name; above all, has never for a moment suspected that the glaring diversities of character and action she perpetually signalized were all the while the fruit exclusively of her own immaturity.

Now Swedenborg's writings reverse this superficial judgment, or turn it into a mere prejudice on our part, having no more valid basis than any other superstition which our devout but unenlightened reverence has temporarily hallowed. His writings effectually invalidate the alleged radical discrepancy among men in God's sight, by proving all men without exception to be in themselves, or apart from God's operation in their nature, alike prone to evil and falsity. Swedenborg uniformly denies that personal distinctions among men, distinctions of merely natural temperament and character, have the least spiritual validity. He denies that it is possible for the Divine being to feel the slightest emotion of tenderness or complacency towards

one person as naturally constituted (say, the apostle John,) which He does not feel towards every other person, however differently constituted (say, Judas Iscariot). He utterly denies the pretension of any creature of God to be spiritually any better, *i. e.* any better in himself, than any other creature, however comparatively degraded the latter may be in all moral or personal regards. And doing all this in entire good faith — scourging out of rational sight forever the conception of any personally meritorious or personally blameworthy relation of man to God — he of course makes it inevitable to conclude against the absolute wisdom of our past social legislation. Indeed, he does more than this. He powerfully disposes his intelligent reader to all those tendencies of modern thought, which go to urge upon society the paramount obligation she herself is under of self-examination, self-denial, and self-humiliation, in order that vice and crime may be no longer punished merely, but actually and permanently extinguished.

In one word, Swedenborg refutes the possibility of a moral righteousness on man's part before God: *i. e.* a righteousness which inheres in the man himself, and is not exclusively derived to him from the equal Divine influx and indwelling in all the forms of our nature. And hence, of course, he stamps all those contrary judgments of character upon which our ordinary social legislation proceeds, as practically puerile and visionary.

But he makes much more thorough work of it than this. He maintains this uncompromising truth of every man's equality with every other man before God, not merely in respect to men on earth, or as they stand reciprocally distinguished to our sight by differences of natural temperament and moral character; but also with respect to men in heaven, or as they stand spiritually differenced one from another to the Divine sight by their various relation to the infinite Goodness and Truth. "In heaven no attention is paid to person, nor the things of person, but to things abstracted from person. Hence they have no recognition of a man from his name or other personal attributes, but only from his distinctive human faculty or quality. The thought of persons limits the angelic idea, or gives it finiteness; whereas that of things does not limit it, but gives it infinitude. No person named in the Word is recognized in heaven, but only the human quality or substance symbolized by that person; neither any nation or people, but the human quality of such nation and people. Thus there is not a single fact of Scripture concerning person, nation, or people which is not completely ignored in heaven, where the angels are totally unconcerned about the personality of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and see no difference between Jew and Gentile, but difference of human quality. The angelic idea, refusing in this manner to be determined to persons, makes the speech of the angels compared with ours unlimited and univer-

sal."[1] "There is no will of good, nor any understanding of truth, which attaches to the angel himself, but only to the Lord in him. The most celestial angel is in himself altogether false and evil: what is good and true in him, being his own not in reality but only apparently."[2] "All good and truth is from the Lord, and what is the Lord's remains His in those who receive it; for it is Divine, and cannot become the property of any man. What is Divine may be in man, but not as his own or in his selfhood, for this is nothing but evil, and he consequently who appropriates what is Divine to himself defiles and profanes it. The Lord's divinity (in human nature) is exquisitely separated from man's selfhood, elevated above and never immersed in it."[3] This is doubtless why, according to another statement of Swedenborg, "there is no enforced or arbitrary authority existing in heaven, since no angel in his heart acknowledges any one superior to himself but the Lord alone."[4] "Heaven is heaven from the Divine alone, he says. So much accordingly as the angels have in them of the Lord's Divine, so much they constitute heaven; but so much as they have of themselves in them, so much they do not constitute heaven"—but rather of course, its opposite.[5]

According to these statements heaven is anything but "a mutual admiration society," and

[1] Arc. Cel., 5225, 8343, 9007.
[2] Ibid., 633.
[3] Apocalypse Revealed, 758.
[4] Apocalypse Explained, 735.
[5] See Arc. Cel., 9479.

angels the most celestial will prove very disagreeable persons to many who now aspire to their company. But let us go on to cull a few more of these generous and humane paragraphs, with the hope that some one who has been deeply imbued with our prevalent man-worship, or current insanity in regard to the necessity of some sort of personal worth in man, before he can be entitled to expect the Divine favor, and been led by it to strain and puff himself out of all childlike innocence and honesty, in order to catch a breath of God's applause, may be arrested by them and reconducted into the ways of truth.

"Every man, regenerate though he be, is such that unless the Lord withheld him from evils and falses, he would cast himself precipitately into hell; and the very instant he is not withheld, he plunges headlong into it, as has been made known to me by actual experiences."[1]

"No one nowadays doubts that evils and falses in man are dispersed and abolished while he is regenerating, so that when he becomes regenerated, nothing of evil and falsity remains, but he is clean and righteous like one cleansed and washed with water. This however is utterly false. For no single evil or falsity in man can be so broken up as to be abolished, but on the contrary, whatsoever evil has been hereditarily derived to a person, or been actually contracted by him, remains; so that every man, even the regenerate man, is

[1] Arc. Cel., 789.

nothing but evil and falsity, as is shown to the life after death. The truth of this statement is demonstrable from the fact, that nothing of good or truth exists in man but from the Lord, and that all his evil and falsity are from selfhood; so that every man, every spirit, yea every angel, if left in the least to themselves, would plunge spontaneously into hell. This is why in scripture the heavens are said to be impure. The angels acknowledge this truth, and whoso refuses to acknowledge it is unfit for their society. It is God's mercy alone which emancipates them from evil; yea, which withdraws and withholds them from hell, into which they of themselves rush headlong."[1]

Again he says in the same remarkable repository: "It has been proved to me by lively experience, that every man, spirit, and angel, viewed in himself, or as to his entire *proprium*, is the vilest excrement, and that if he were left to himself he would breathe only hatreds, revenges, cruelties, and foulest adulteries. These things are his *proprium* and his will. This is evident to reflection from the fact, that man as he is born is viler than all beasts; and when he grows up and becomes his own master, unless external bonds which are of the law, and the bonds he imposes upon himself in order to grow greatest and richest, prevented him, he would rush into every iniquity, nor ever rest until he had subjugated everybody else to himself, and possessed himself of their substance,

[1] Arc. Cel., 868.

showing no favor to any but those who should become his abject slaves. Such is the nature of every man, however ignorant he be of the fact in consequence of his want of power to do what he would like; but give him the power, and release him from the obligations of prudence, and his inclination would fall no whit behind his opportunity. The beasts are not so bad as this, for they are born into a certain order of nature. Those that are fierce and rapacious do indeed inflict injury upon others, but only from self-preservation; and when they devour others, it is to appease hunger, for when this is done they cease from violence." [1]

Certainly these are anything but slipshod statements. They involve on their very face indeed a philosophy which no merely metaphysic wit has yet sounded; which, on the contrary, would seem to leave Schelling and Sir William Hamilton forever to bump their learned heads, without striking out a solitary spark available to human hope or progress.

What, obviously, is the fundamental postulate of this philosophy?

It is that man is in literal strictness a creature of God, dependent every moment upon the Divine communication for all that he has and is and hopes to become. He is absolutely and at every moment void of life in himself, so that if the fulness of the creative bounty were suspended towards him for a moment, or if it were for an instant overclouded, he would at once cease to be.

[1] Arc. Cel., 987.

Such is the fundamental postulate of this philosophy: but this would go but a little way to satisfy the mind, if this were all. For the reader would in that case reasonably ask: "Whence comes it, if this be the truth of things, that the appearance is so different? If man be this abject creature of God, how has he selfhood, or a feeling of life in himself? How is it that he feels so self-sufficient, for example, as to be able to reason about the possibility of his never having been created, and to doubt the Divine existence? See the statue which I create. It is abjectly servile to my will, and has no capacity whatever to gainsay it. It exhibits no faintest show of life or consciousness. And is it conceivable that the creature of the Divine power should not be infinitely more dependent upon God, than any product of my power can be upon me? How then shall we explain man's moral experience on the hypothesis of his unlimited creatureship? How shall we account for his exuberant selfhood, freedom, conscious life, if he be the absolute creation you make him?"

It is clearly impossible to satisfy these reasonable demands, if we continue to conceive of creation as a physical act of God in time and space; if we do not at once begin to view it as a purely rational act, involving the most exquisite adjustment of means to ends; or what is the same thing in other words, if we do not conceive of the natural creation as taking place altogether in the interests of a totally distinct

and superior style of life. Morality is a purely rational fact. It supposes its subject to be a ratio, or mean, between two extremes: God and nature, infinite and finite, spirit and flesh. To attempt to account for moral consciousness then on physical principles purely, would be like attempting to account for a child by assigning it a mother and denying it a father. It is evident that we can explain no phenomenon of consciousness, if we allow its physical element to swamp or supersede its spiritual one. It is impossible in fact to justify a single breath of morality, unless you subordinate what is natural in the creature to what is spiritual, unless you make what gives it finiteness or identity serve what gives it infinitude or individuality. In short, our natural creation is not final, does not take place on its own behalf, but only in order to something else, which is our spiritual conjunction or fellowship with God. As the Bible phrases it, we are created in order to be made or formed. "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which he had *created to make.*"[1] And inasmuch as all spiritual conjunction or fellowship implies mutual action and reaction—reciprocal give and take—between the parties to it, it is evident that man can become spiritually conjoined with God only in freedom, only so far forth as he is consciously self-prompted thereto, or feels an intelligent sympathy with the Divine name.

[1] Gen. ii. 3.

Freedom or selfhood, then, is *implied* in God's creature, just as the foundation of a house is implied in its superstructure; because the creature, being destined for spiritual conjunction with God, for the fellowship of his maker's perfection, must of course first *be* to his own consciousness, or exist in himself, before he can become conjoined with God. I emphasize the word "implied" here, because I want the reader distinctly to understand the point involved, which is: that that most distinctive and characteristic force in our nature which we call freedom, rationality, selfhood, the moral force in short, and upon which we are all so disposed to run riot, is not a finality; is by no means an absolute gift; but is on the contrary a most strict and perpetual Divine communication or permission, in the interest exclusively of a very superior spiritual and eternal end. This is the infirmity of all our ordinary traditional notions on the subject of creation, that man's selfhood or moral force, his freedom or rationality, is tacitly excepted from the Divine operation, and his mere passive or physical experience accounted for. But clearly if I am an unlimited creature of God, my most characteristic experience is precisely what that fact ought best to explain. If I am an indubitable creation of God's power, then whatsoever goes inmostly to constitute me to my own perception, must especially fall within that framework, and not outside of it; must confess itself strictly incidental to my creation, instead of accidental as we are inclined

to regard it. I may feel myself to be my own master just as much as I please, and claim with pride the exclusive responsibility of my own actions. I may cherish such a feeling indeed of my own independence of any higher power than that I call Nature, as to entertain grave doubts of the Divine existence: but these facts should only illustrate not invalidate my alleged creatureship. Every legitimate hypothesis of my creatureship is bound to cover and account for all these apparently contradictory phenomena, under penalty of invalidating itself. Let me rob my neighbor of his property to any extent, defame his character, betray his domestic peace, deprive him of life; in short, let me obscure the Divine image in my soul under any amount of turpitude: the reader has not the smallest right to go on affirming my creatureship, without at the least trying to explain these very ugly things by it. He may be scientifically incapable of doing so, but it is a manifest philosophic obligation upon him to make the attempt. For if God be truly my creator, it is my very self that he gives being to, my most distinctive characteristic and inseparable self: and every attempt consequently to postulate my creation, and at the same time exclude my moral history from it, confesses itself simply preposterous.

Let my meaning be clearly understood. The moral experience of man has always been and still is the stumbling-block of Philosophy, because Philosophy has not known how to bring it within creation, inasmuch as it regards crea-

tion as a purely physical exploit of God's power, an event in time and space; and hence leaves the human mind or the moral realm of experience completely unhoused by it. Now I say that Philosophy is most inconsistent in this, because if I am a creature of God, if He gives me literally all the being I possess, Philosophy has no right to restrict His creative operation to the limits of my merely physical or passive personality: it is bound to prove it equally energetic and absolute within the range of my moral or active subjectivity as well. It has no right to say that God possesses me *ab extra* exclusively: it is bound, if all my being derives from Him, to show that He possesses me also *ab intra*. I know very well how contrary this is to established prejudice. The grand old religions of the world are running very low nowadays; have given place in fact to the emptiest scientific babble. The moral sphere of life consequently, the sphere of our felt freedom or selfhood, is everywhere getting to be regarded by insincere and speculative religionists as absolute and rightfully exempt from the Divine invasion. Morality, as interpreted by our cleverest and most admired theological empirics, means a capacity in its subject of absolute self-determination; of underived power; means the state of a man who not only in appearance but in reality is a law unto himself. No doubt the interests of our responsibility to God and the neighbor, when viewed in the letter or on the surface, do seem to justify this insane pretension, inasmuch as they require

that our conduct should be visibly self-moved, or date from ourselves exclusively, to the denial of all outward constraint. But then the surface aspect of things is precisely what the philosopher disregards, being above all things careful to seize their substantial or spiritual import, which alone is conformable to absolute truth. At all events it is just this surface aspect of the case which Swedenborg proves to be eminently fallacious, in showing us that the apparent selfhood or freedom we have from nature, is nothing but an appearance, vouchsafed to us in the interest of a higher or spiritual evolution, and contingent upon a certain strict equilibrium which the Divine Providence maintains in our nature between the opposing poles of good and evil.

Let me briefly illustrate the practical difference on this point between Swedenborg and the popular theologians, by a familiar example.

I tell a lie, perhaps to screen myself from some menaced blame or injury, perhaps to advance myself at another's expense. Whatever be the motive of my action, I have an entire sense of freedom from constraint in doing it. So far as any feeling of coercion operates upon me to do it, I feel that I might refrain from doing it as well as not. In short, the determination of my action lies to my own consciousness wholly in myself. I actually debate whether to do it or not, and either deliberately conclude to do it, or else purposely leave my mind so un-made-up about it, as to render that

result very probable whenever the occasion to decide shall arise.

Now the popular theologian looking at this experience would say, that my natural feeling of freedom in the premises, was the exact measure of the spiritual truth; that I felt free, in other words, to tell the lie, because I absolutely was free. He sees that so far as appearances go I am free; that so far as man's judgment or my own consciousness is concerned, I acted under no constraint; and having no idea that natural appearances are only inversely and not directly as their spiritual realities, he concludes that my moral power, the power which I consciously have either to tell the lie or not to tell it, is all my own, my own absolutely, and independently of my relations to other beings.

Swedenborg explodes this sensuous reasoning *in toto*. He denies that my natural feeling of freedom in the premises is any measure of the spiritual reality. He affirms, in short, that I feel free to do evil, and therefore charge myself with it, not by virtue of anything in myself, for in myself I am and can be nothing but a recipient; but altogether by virtue of an operation of God in the spiritual world, or the unseen depths of the human mind, so sharply separating good from evil, heaven from hell, and then so exquisitely balancing the one by the other, as to prevent any preponderant influx of either into nature, and enable Him to endow me consequently with a sense of freedom, a feeling of selfhood, so genial and exquisite that I cannot

help appropriating it, or feeling it to be indeed bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, and foregoing everything for it. God gives me this selfhood or conscious freedom, this ability to discern for myself between good and evil, not absolutely or for its own sake, but in the interest of my immortal spiritual conjunction with Him. I can only become spiritually conjoined with him, as we have already seen, in freedom, or in so far as I am consciously self-prompted thereto; and He accordingly endows me with my natural selfhood or freedom, only that it may serve as the basis of this higher boon; or in order that I, knowing good and evil, may as of myself cleave to the one and forsake the other, and so come spiritually into such a relation of correspondence with His perfection, as that I shall eventually be quickened into the liveliest personal sympathy with, and most solicitous personal aspiration towards, His fragrant and spotless name.

The difference, then, between Swedenborg and the popular religionists is, that the latter make the moral consciousness in man a finality, or its own end; so leaving the good and evil that are in human nature, or heaven and hell, totally unamenable to any higher or subsequent operation of the Divine power. According to Swedenborg, on the other hand, our moral history is but a merciful Divine means to an infinitely superior Divine end in humanity, which is our spiritual conjunction, as a race, with God. Our moral experience is merely a provisional

basis or foundation in the individual bosom, for a stupendous spiritual edifice which the Divine wisdom is assiduously rearing in human nature itself. And if we regard it accordingly not as being purely ministerial to this diviner style of manhood, but as magisterial in fact, and having a right to our unlimited allegiance, we shall be like a man who is so intent upon sinking the foundations of his house to the greatest possible depth, that he comes at last upon the elemental fires, or finds his ostentatious labor swallowed up of quicksands.

In short, our ordinary cosmology accounts or professes to account for Nature, which is the bare skeleton of existence; but it leaves History which is the lifeblood and rounded flesh that clothe that skeleton with beauty, wholly lawless and accidental. Swedenborg, on the contrary, illustrates Nature by History, or makes the body of things rigidly authenticate their soul. This treatment converts creation from a mere ostentatious exhibition of unprincipled power, without rational beginning as without rational result, into an infinitely tender and orderly procedure of the eternal Love and Wisdom, in all the endlessly various but ineffably harmonious forms of human nature.

This is but a glimpse of Swedenborg's labor. Yet even this glimpse entitles us to expect of him a clear philosophic explication of the great mystery of creation: *i. e.* a doctrine upon that subject which shall appease every aspiration of the heart towards God, and every demand of the

intellect thence engendered. The invincible witness of the heart towards God is, that he is infinite in love: *i. e.* that His love for his creatures is wholly untainted by any regard for Himself. It is the equally invincible witness of our intelligence that He is infinite in wisdom: *i. e.* that his ability to carry out his designs of love falls no whit behind his disposition. A doctrine of creation, therefore, which should practically affront either of these great witnesses, by affirming a permanent imperfection in the creative work, or actual outcome of this infinite Love and Wisdom, would stamp itself unworthy of men's lasting respect.

CHAPTER II.

THE profoundest of our sensuous judgments, and the basis of the religious instinct in us, is, that our natural force is final: that far from being strictly incidental to a grander subsequent evolution of the Divine power in us, it is, on the contrary, its own end: thus that the pleasure and the pain, the health and the disease, the strength and the weakness, the growth and the decay, upon whose equilibrium our natural consciousness is contingent, are in themselves absolute goods and evils: to be received, the former with thankfulness, as a mark of the Divine favor; the latter with sorrow, as a mark of the Divine displeasure.

Christianity has done very much to soften the fierceness of this Pagan inheritance in our bosoms, if not altogether to extinguish it. But the same prejudice in application to our moral instincts, still exists there unsuspected, awaiting the slow correction of science. Almost every one in Christendom, especially in literal or European Christendom, conceives that our moral judgments, our judgments of character, are a direct efflux of the Divine judgment: thus that where we see a difference of good and evil among men, God sees the same difference, only

in aggravated form; that where we approve the good man and condemn the evil one, He feels literally the same emotions in kind that we feel, only more intense in degree. I scarcely know an orthodox ecclesiastic who is not so content with feeding upon this windy fruit of "the tree of knowledge of good and evil," as virtually to agree with the old serpent in considering that diet as the soul's best nutriment, infallibly assimilating our intelligence to God's, in place of forever differencing it from His.

Swedenborg effectually exposes this insanity, by proving that just as our physical experience has had no other end than to base or matriculate our moral manhood, so our moral experience in its turn has had no other end than to serve as a matrix or mould to our true spiritual manhood. He reduces the part which morality plays in the Divine administration to a strictly educative one; its whole office being to loosen nature's remorseless grasp upon us, and so prepare us spiritually for the unimpeded Divine inhabitation. Nothing consequently can be more hurtful to the intellect than to confound the moral and spiritual consciousness in man; or make that purely phenomenal freedom which distinguishes us naturally from the brute, take the place of that most real freedom which allies us spiritually with God. One is simply the badge of our natural dignity, of what forever separates us from the animal; the other is the mark of our individual spiritual culture. One merely stamps us as God's true creature among all lower creatures; the other

pronounces us His children, redeemed from distant creatureship into intimate sonship, by the frankest freest and most cordial participation of His spirit.

The particular service then which Swedenborg renders to Philosophy, consists in the complete elucidation he affords the moral instinct, as basing and alone basing the evolution of our spiritual destiny. Morality admits of no absolute justification. How can any mind of true reverence tolerate the conception of a creature of God, who is anything in-himself? For to be anything in himself, he must claim a power underived from God, and the pretension to such a power is fatal to creatureship. Accordingly, whenever a man attempts to vindicate morality unconditionally, he finds himself logically compelled to bring up in Atheism or Pantheism: at all events to deny creation in any intelligible sense of that word.[1] What justifies moral existence and alone justifies it, is the use it subserves to an infinitely superior style of manhood: precisely as what justifies us in digging a subterranean foundation for our houses is, the use such foundation is calculated to promote to an edifice made up of light and air.

Thus according to Swedenborg our moral history with all its tremendous issues of heaven and hell, falls within creation not outside of it:

[1] Dr. Bushnell hazards a very rash and even desperate solution of the difficulty, by making God to create a number of little gods instead of men: his idea of morality being that it involves a participation of the Divine essence! See "Nature and the Supernatural," *passim*.

that is to say, does not express the relation of the creature to the creator, but of the creature to himself. Unlike Kant Swedenborg restricts nature to a purely constitutive use, and denies her the least creative efficacy. Her total function is to confer subjectivity not objectivity. She gives conscious existence or identity to her subjects, but has no power to give them unconscious being or individuality. Kant himself indeed allows that *our knowledge* of nature reaches only to what is constitutive and phenomenal of other existence in her; but then he maintains that she possesses a latent noumenal or creative force in herself as well, insisting that the thing which appears is never the veritable thing-in-itself, never the thing which really is. Swedenborg on the other hand affirms that the thing which appears is the veritable thing-in-itself; that phenomenon and noumenon are identical in other words; since the only selfhood or existence which is possible and proper to created things, must in the nature of the case be phenomenal not absolute.

Why "in the nature of the case"? The answer is very obvious.

We saw a while ago that the Divine end in creation is the eternal spiritual conjunction of the creature with Himself: this end being necessitated by the very infinitude of the Divine Love, which is so unalloyed by self-love as to be spontaneously communicative of itself to others: *i. e.* creative. But what is other than God, what is alien to God, has and plainly can have no absolute existence, no existence in-itself; but only

a phenomenal or apparent existence permitted in the interests of God's creative design. Thus much existence indeed—existence of this purely phenomenal and permitted quality—is indispensable to it, because otherwise the creature could have *no* existence, no imaginable ground of projection from God, nor consequently any claim to have been created by Him. The creature's natural identity in short is the first interest, the fundamental postulate, of his spiritual individuality. For clearly God does not create what is Himself, but only what is not Himself; what is alien to Himself; what indeed is intensely opposite and repugnant to Himself. And alienation from God, opposition to God, is never absolutely but only and at best phenomenally possible; being contingent upon the otherwise unimaginable depths of the creative mercy.

Thus God's creature is bound first of all to exist phenomenally or to his own consciousness, before he can claim to exist absolutely; *i. e.* to God's own perception as well. But clearly this phenomenal existence is the only existence the creature can claim to have in-himself: whatever other more real existence he has, must be not in himself but exclusively in God. This, briefly, is what I meant by saying that "in the nature of things" the only existence or selfhood possible to the creature is phenomenal not noumenal.

In view of these considerations the reader will be able to anticipate the commanding light which they shed upon the nature of evil. For if the fundamental law of creation be what we

have alleged, namely: that the creature have *phenomenal* or conscious selfhood, in order to base his subsequent spiritual conjunction with God: then it follows that his highest welfare must consist in his not being duped by this mere appearance, in his taking it at its actual worth as an appearance; and his deepest misery consist in his mistaking it for an absolute reality. His selfhood or conscious life in himself is indeed but the outward form of his inmost spiritual dependence upon God; so that if he allows it to degenerate into a sentiment of independence towards God, *i. e.* to become absolute, he falls incontinently into evil.

Now this result is inevitable to the creature's inexperience: but Christianity teaches us that so far from regretting it, we should rejoice in it as furnishing the only fitting opportunity for the true manifestation of the Divine power towards us, as becoming able really to *create* us naturally, only by first *redeeming* us spiritually. Spiritual redemption, not physical creation, is the inmost splendor of the Divine name; and he who has not learned thus much of Christianity, has a good deal yet to learn. Let me explain.

What I say is: that inasmuch as the sentiment of selfhood or freedom is instinctive to the human bosom, being a preliminary exigency of our spiritual formation in the Divine image, it remains innocent only so long as it is an instinct, and does not assume to dominate the consciousness: that is, only so long as the race is in the infancy of its development. While the

race is still in infantile conditions, and has not come to scientific consciousness, the consciousness of its destined power over nature, the sentiment of selfhood or freedom in its bosom is but another name for the sentiment of its dependence upon God: and a tender religious awe consequently hallows the Divine name to its bosom, just as a feeling of respect and affection hallows a parent's name to a child. Undoubtedly this awe would soon degenerate into servile superstition (witness the heathen nations), unless the mind of the race *grew* by experience, by the gradual conquest of nature; unless, in other words, it became scientifically enlarged: just as the child's habitual reverence for the parent would degenerate into chronic imbecility, if the child should not eventually grow to the parent's intellectual stature. The growth of the mind, accordingly, out of its purely instinctual beginnings into pronounced scientific form and order, is inevitable, because necessary to its eventual philosophic sanity, or complete fellowship with God.

But now I say only what is known to the experience of every reader, when I say that the child as he grows to man's estate and becomes qualified himself to wield the paternal inheritance, puts off to his own observation the innocence and docility which marked his infancy, the ready unquestioning obedience he exhibited to the paternal word, the tender confiding reverence he felt for the paternal mind and character. He now wishes to be wise, not

from his father but from himself; and good, no longer from outward tuition or constraint, but from his own prompting, from a sense of what is due exclusively to his own personal dignity. It is the rise of a practically healthful scepticism or Protestantism in the soul; a needful insurrection against all purely external or arbitrary authority. So precisely does it fare with the analogous history of the race, or the associated consciousness of man. Its infantile intelligence also puts on erelong the characters of adolescence and manhood. As its power over nature widens, as its passional and intellectual wants stimulate and develop its active powers, it looks up less reverently to heaven, and learns to confide more fully upon itself, upon what it feels and hence supposes to be its own absolute resources; the tender religious awe of its earlier days melting thus infallibly into the scientific pride and power of its majority.

This advancing scientific consciousness of the race has always been regarded as a fallen state of the mind; but it is not so absolutely; it is so only relatively to the mental condition from which it departs. Thus measured it is no doubt a fall. If religion is bound to undergo the slow sepulture of science, with no hope of any subsequent resurrection in living or glorified form: if, in other words, science constitute the perfected form of the mind, the full measure of its expansibility: I, for one at least, have no hesitation in saying that it would have been better for the race to have remained to this day in its cradle,

hearkening to the inspiration of naiad and dryad, of sea-nymph and of faun, than to have come out of it only to find its endless spiritual capacities, its capacities of spontaneous action, hopelessly stranded upon these barren rocks of science, ruthlessly imprisoned in her lifeless laws or generalizations. For if the difference between the purely religious or instinctual consciousness of the race and its growing scientific consciousness, be, as we have seen, the difference between the child and the youth, between diffidence and self-confidence; then it is extremely easy still further to see, that this subtle spiritual change which creeps over the mind of the race simply by virtue of its increasing acquaintance with itself, with its own God-given powers, can only deepen as time rolls on, until the mind becomes confirmed at last in all manner of pride and vulgar self-assertion: until its infantile and innocent sentiment of freedom, becomes hardened into one of complete unhesitating and blatant independence.

But there is no need to estimate the change exclusively in this aspect, that is, in its relation to the mental condition out of which it springs. We must view it in relation to the mental condition in which it issues or brings up; and here we shall see that what men have called a fall, is really a rise. For the object of the Divine Providence having been to secure man's cordial fellowship with Himself, who is infinite Love, love without any limitation of self-love, this object could only be attained empirically; that is,

by the creature undergoing in his own proper experience such a sickening conviction of the evils wrapped up in an unlimited abandonment to self, as would make him heartily ashamed of himself, and lead him to seek purification from God. The experience of evil accordingly, which has been inseparable from our rational expansion, is strictly tributary in the Divine wisdom to a good which otherwise would never have dawned upon us; a spontaneous good, as much higher than the merely instinctual good which it displaces or rather exalts to a higher power, as the tried wisdom of the mature man is higher than the tender promise of childhood.

This, briefly stated, is Swedenborg's way of dealing with the problem of evil; and I for my part cannot help considering it a very satisfactory way, until I am shown a better. It has at least this commanding philosophic advantage over every other suggestion I have met with on the subject, that it makes evil a perfectly intelligible incident, no longer a wholly mysterious accident, of our historic progress: so leaving it to undergo whatever healing modification the normal issues of that progress may engender. In other words it relegates the origin of evil away back to the *instinctual* realm of life; and inasmuch as all our instincts are themselves utterly servile to the needs successively of our voluntary and spontaneous life, of our moral and æsthetic culture, so it may fairly be presumed that any evil which these instincts involve will ultimately be found to have been itself most strictly tributary

to a good in human nature so Divine, that the bare conception of it would have been otherwise impossible.

This however is but an episode. I introduced it only to illustrate by a signal instance the power which Swedenborg's view of our natural phenomenality has, to shed light upon the most intricate problems of human origin and destiny: and so engage my reader's attention to what I have further to say. What I want my reader to observe is the sincere emphasis which Swedenborg's doctrine of Nature puts upon the actual truth of creation; the fidelity with which he insists upon man's being in literal strictness a creature of God, and therefore absolutely void of being-in-himself. This fact of his creatureship makes it impossible for him to claim anything more than a phenomenal self hood or consciousness, without blinding himself intellectually to the creative goodness and truth. If he be by nature an abject and total dependent upon God, he is evidently unentitled to self hood or personal consciousness save by a constant Divine communication; save by a ceaseless Divine permission. And if accordingly he comes to view the truth of the case differently: if he so reckon upon his felt absoluteness or self-sufficiency as to attribute good and evil to himself: it will be impossible to prevent him tumbling incontinently into every baleful illusion of pride, and to that extent excluding himself inwardly or spiritually from God's peace and purity.

Thus the Bible informs us in mystical phrase,

that man instinctively feels that "it is *not* good for him to be alone:" *i. e.* to be without selfhood, without the faculty and the dignity of fathering his own action. In other words man tends inevitably and innocently to selfhood, tends to feeling himself the source of his own affection and thought and power. And God mercifully accommodates Himself to this infallible instinct of the creature, in providing him, as the mystical record further alleges, "a help meet for him:" *i. e.* permits him to realize selfhood and bring forth from it whatsoever fruit it is capable of yielding. But then the Divine Providence thus authenticates the natural instinct of the creature not absolutely or unconditionally, but exclusively in the interest of the latter's eventual and perfect spiritual conjunction with Himself. He authenticates this instinctive yearning in the creature after selfhood, in order that the latter, being thus taught how stupid and vile he is in himself or intrinsically and apart from the Divine conjunction, may effectually aspire to the knowledge and obedience of those laws of Divine order which alone give him rest. In other words He gives the creature natural selfhood, or the feeling of being his own life, only in order that the creature, knowing *as of himself* what he is by uncreation, so to speak, or natural disjunction with God, may equally *as of himself* incline to that spiritual conjunction with Him which alone is life.

Nothing can be more clear than that the immense mercy with which the Divine Love in-

wardly vivifies and fills out this illusion on man's part, does not affect its essential nature, does not make it any less an illusion, does not convert it into an absolute and unqualified reality. If selfhood, being an illusion so grateful to the natural heart, is taken advantage of by the Divine wisdom in order to bring about a spiritual elevation of the creature which otherwise would have been both unattainable and inconceivable: that fact must not blind us to its exact character as an illusion, nor embolden us to argue from it to the true spiritual relation between creator and creature. We may indeed pardon this fatuity in uninstructed minds; but what shall we say of labored systems of Theology and Philosophy, which assume the unconditional veracity of the moral sentiment as their base, and construct a cosmology upon the ground not merely of the creature's *seeming* — but of his *real* — independence of the creator? Yet this is the fatal dry-rot which has laid low every edifice reared by Philosophy since the beginning of history. Idealism is only a potent testimony to the existence of the fatality: it furnishes no remedy against it. The fact is Idealism does not confront the philosophic problem: it only evades it. The whole problem of Philosophy is to vindicate the actual truth of creation, by reconciling the freedom of the creature with his dependence upon the creator; or harmonizing the apparent absoluteness of man with the real absoluteness from which he all the while confessedly derives. And the way Idealism takes to solve the prob-

lem, is by vacating it of substance. It vindicates creation by denying it any actuality; or reconciles man and God, creature and creator, finite and infinite, phenomenal and absolute, simply by confounding them: *i. e.* by making the created consciousness a transient form or mould of the uncreated.

Swedenborg is the first man, so far as I am aware, in the literary history of the world, who has put a decisive stop to this philosophic child's-play. He shows with commanding evidence that the selfhood of man is a reality only in God and not out of Him; and that there is no need accordingly to sacrifice either element of the equation, in order to maintain the integrity of the other. He demonstrates with such overpowering lustre the veritable *infinitude* of the Divine resources, that this duality of creature and creator which Philosophy has always found so paradoxical, becomes henceforth commonplace and obligatory; so that I at least do not hesitate to avow my conviction that he alone has given true body to Philosophy, and put her at last upon a career of literally endless prosperity.

I said just now that Swedenborg satisfies the utmost need of Philosophy, by showing us that the selfhood of man is a reality only *in* God and not *out* of Him, as our sensuous theologies have hitherto reported. What I mean by this statement is, evidently, that Swedenborg gives such a surprising reality to the creative Love — so avouches its rational infinitude or perfection —

that we instantly see man's self hood or freedom, with all those infamies that attach to its fullest expansion, and forcibly disjoin him to his own consciousness from God, *completely explained and accounted for;* and consequently find ourselves acknowledging creation no longer as a stupid intellectual problem, but as an irresistible postulate of the heart. Love is thus the final word, the grand unuttered secret of Philosophy: infinite Love; a love so perfect, so untainted with self-love as to be of necessity creative: *i. e.*, invincibly bent upon *communicating* its own unstinted power and bliss to what is not itself, to what indeed is the exact and total opposite of itself.

But we shall best do justice to Swedenborg, and put ourselves in the fittest attitude to estimate his great services to Philosophy, if we first of all bestow a cursory glance upon the very loose state of things, intellectually viewed, which under the name of religion, and the science thence derived, constitutes the popular culture of Christendom. Let us first glance at those insufficiencies in the strictly religious sphere of thought, which call so loudly for some authoritative doctrine of Nature. Afterwards we shall be able to estimate those confessed scientific disabilities under which what is called Philosophy now labors.

CHAPTER III.

THE scientific difficulties which beset Natural Religion, the notoriously endless embarrassments it offers the intellect, reflect the native poverty of our understanding in Divine things, grow out of the habit we have of regarding the natural sphere of creation as final. It is this futile habit of mind which makes us look upon the sacred writings as a mine of literal historic information merely, and not as a marvellous veiling over or clouding of purely spiritual truth, in accommodation to the needs of our grossly sensual understanding.

For example: the opening chapters of Genesis report the work of creation as proceeding from the great orbs of space, through the successive orders of vegetable and animal existence, until it attains its full rich diapason in man: thus presenting all the things of nature as collated into and culminating in the human form, which in point of instinct or natural force is the feeblest and most contemptible of all forms, by way of symbolizing to our apprehension the great spiritual verity of the LORD or DIVINE NATURAL HUMANITY, as alone adequate to account for the majesty and mystery of life.

Now natural religion degrades this superb

imagery so rich in philosophic significance, into a narrative of so many literal physical exploits of God accomplished in space and time.

So also when the Scripture, having thus posited man as the consummation of nature's forms, goes on to represent his dawning moral consciousness under the image of *a woman, fashioned out of his own substance while he sleeps*, natural religion does not hesitate to transmute this perfectly intelligible *symbol* of the gradual unsuspected rise of selfhood in man, into a perfectly unintelligible historic fact; into a perfectly incredible physical procedure of God, revolting alike to truth and decency.

In like manner again when the sacred narrative proceeds to symbolize the dawn of spiritual life in man, or the access of conscience, resulting from his discovery of the profound inward destitution which underlies his fair outward seeming, under the image of "eating of a tree called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil:"[1] the carnal understanding just as little stickles to sink this sublime philosophic lesson into the stupid personal fact of Adam's actual lapse from the Divine favor and his consequent subjection to death temporal and eternal at the Divine hands: thus reducing the high and holy Name to a level with our own characteristic littleness and petulance. And finally it

[1] "And when the WOMAN saw that the tree was good for food, *etc.*, SHE took of the fruit, and gave also to her husband, and he did eat:" *i. e.*, man being *self*-guided exclusively or confiding in his own wisdom rather than the Divine, clasps the shadow of truth to his bosom not the substance.

alleges the great verity of the Incarnation, not by any means as the sole interior life and substance of creation, but as a purely empirical event in the Divine administration, designed to recall creation to its moorings after it had somehow unaccountably gone adrift in this exquisitely absurd and imbecile personality of Adam: precisely as if God were some unskilful workman, who is obliged to mend his work immediately that he has dismissed it from his hands as "all very good."

The outrage offered to the reason by this childish dogmatism, is obviously insurmountable. For if the being whom God creates be literally capable of going astray, the discredit of such a capacity must attach exclusively to the Divine name. If God give being to a creature, and this creature keep not the estate in which he was created, then the inference is not to be avoided, that the creative power itself and alone is at fault: that it is by no means an infinite power as we had fondly believed: that it is so far in fact from being infinite, *that its limitation proceeds from its own absolute creature:* which is probably the baldest absurdity, the most crying contradiction, ever offered to the reason since the world has stood.

Of course if I make a statue of Apollo, and the work confess itself a failure, you would say the failure was due either on the one hand to my want of genius to conceive, or my want of skill to execute, so grand a work: or else on the other hand to some latent obduracy of my

material, which no genius could anticipate and no skill overcome.

But this alternative is wholly lacking in the catastrophe imagined by orthodoxy. Orthodoxy alleges that God makes all things out of nothing, out of absolutely no material whatever; so that if they turn out ill, the responsibility of their aberration in no way attaches to themselves: for by the hypothesis they have no selfhood or character but what God imposes upon them, being summoned into instant consciousness by the creative fiat: and so attaches wholly to their maker. The orthodox conception is that the creature is formed out of absolutely *nothing*, and hence is utterly destitute of subjective force or selfhood apart from his objective being: so that any evil which may appear in him attributes itself instantly to the creator, confesses itself exclusively due either to His original want of genius to conceive, or His original want of skill to execute, a perfect work: in short, to some defect in the creative love or wisdom, or both.

The mother fallacy which breeds all these petty fallacies in the popular understanding, consists in attempting to conceive of an infinite power acting finitely, or under the limitations of space and time. Natural religion conceives that there was originally a space *where*, and a time *when*, creation was not. It conceives accordingly that these two great idle wildernesses of time and space were inhabited by a mute inactive Deity alone; and that this extraordinary

Deity, tired at last of slumbering in eternal sloth, sent forth a great creative shout, or succession of shouts, which made the existing cosmos suddenly appear as if it had always been.

Even if we admit this hypothesis, creation turns out a vastly greater boon to the creator than it does to the creature. Whatever benevolence such a creation may be argued to involve to the creature, it unquestionably argues much more to the creator himself. For who can fancy the ghastly solitude to which, for so many orthodox eternities, the creator's imputed inactivity had condemned Him, without a shudder of boundless horror? And who therefore can perceive this hideous solitude suddenly blossom into the profusest society, without feeling that he who alone had encountered the past desolation, was infinitely more to be felicitated upon the present surprising transformation, than they who were to have only an *ex post facto* knowledge of it?

But the whole conception is boundlessly and bewilderingly absurd; absurd enough to nourish a standing army of famished Tom Paines into annual fatness. There were no time and space prior to creation, simply because time and space are experiences of the finite mind, of the created consciousness exclusively, and so fall within creation not outside of it. They are constitutionally involved in all purely conscious or subjective existence; time having no meaning save to furnish a *rational* or relative basis — space a *sensible* or finite basis — to such existence.

Without time I should have no logical existence, or capacity of thought; without space, no sensitive existence, or capacity of affection. Were it not for the logical substance or background which time furnishes to the events of history, history would not exist to me. Were it not for the sensible substance or background which space communicates to the objects of nature, nature herself would not exist to me. In short the very stuff of my intellect and sensibility is furnished by space and time, so that in proportion as you abstract them you reduce me to blank unconsciousness or non-existence. Thus time and space do not exist in themselves (or apart from the mind), but only relatively to the human subject; the all of time representing the bounds, thus the integrity, of human thought; the all of space the bounds, thus the integrity, of human passion: so both alike compelling, the one all history, the other all existence, within the strictest limits of the human form, within the straitest dimensions of the human consciousness.

We do not see Time and Space to be what they really are, mere constitutional conditions of our consciousness: and we do not see Nature consequently to be what she really is, nothing more and nothing less than the contents of our universal subjectivity, made visible and objective to the individual or derivative subject: because we have no belief in the real universality of consciousness, but only in its phenomenal individuality; because, in other words, our reason is still

dominated by sense, our science still swamped in imagination. A spiritual intelligence, which means one no longer dominated but on the contrary completely served by sense, perceives time and space as embodying the true and entire mental subjectivity of the race; and as having therefore no objective truth or validity save *to an inferior or finite and derivative subjectivity.* Every enlightened person perceives the true substances of the universe to be exclusively human or spiritual, as goodness and truth, love and wisdom; and regards time and space as mere sensuous forms or appearances of these realities, accommodated to the needs of our infantile understanding, by dimly imaging or symbolizing verities which it is as yet too gross to apprehend. Of course the young must be talked to as if creation took place in space and time, *i. e.* as if it were a purely physical, and not a purely spiritual, exertion of Divine power. Because as they are still under the dominion of sense and incapable of spiritual insight, we must either clothe our instruction in parables of sensuous imagery, or else give up instructing them altogether. But our orthodox theologians are men in understanding, being able to discern spiritual truth or substance in its own light. They therefore should be ashamed to regard creation as a work effected by God in space and time; and should insist upon regarding it exclusively in the light shed upon it by the great truth — to which moreover they profess so much allegiance — of the INCARNATION; *i. e.* as a work Divinely

wrought within the strictest limits of human nature, or the bosom of universal man.

After all however the decisive reprobation which the traditional cosmology invites, is philosophic rather than scientific; being based more upon the outrage it offers the heart than that which it offers the reason. Natural religion represents creation as an act of pure will on God's part, a movement of simple caprice, involving therefore not one particle of the honest labor and sweat which go to the execution of any humane enterprise: say, the growing or the making or the baking of a loaf of bread: and consequently forbidding us to feel a single spontaneous emotion of gratitude or admiration towards Him. I cannot possibly feel grateful to any one for giving me what it costs him nothing to give; what he may just as easily give as not. Nor can I honestly admire any being for doing what there is no opposition to his doing; my just admiration of any work being strictly proportionate to my lively appreciation of the obstacles involved in its execution. The human mind in fact is constitutionally incapable of acknowledging any excellence which is not of its own order or essentially human; that is to say, which does not express in some manner the vital selfhood, the inmost heart, of its subject. I can perfectly understand and appreciate human action, action which proceeds from within outwardly, or which, taking its rise in some want of the heart, flows down through the channel of the understanding, into appropriate word or

deed. Any thing lower than this is vegetable growth or animal motion, and is unworthy the name of human action. And any thing in the way of action higher than this is to our faculties simply inconceivable and incredible.

Accordingly when orthodoxy commends God, the universal creator, to our rational reverence and affection, under the guise of a great melodramatic being so essentially heartless as to live for untold eternities without feeling any desire for companionship; so essentially irrational that it cost him no effort of thought to summon the universe into absolute being: I repugn the instruction as converting the creative virtue into mere personal whim or caprice, unworthy of a reasonable man's respect. I will not acknowledge a God so void of human worth; so every way level to the character of a mere ostentatious showman or conjuror. It is just such a childish caricature of Deity as Byron might paint to match those childish caricatures of manhood with which his purulent imagination runs riot. I am constrained by every inspiration of true manhood to demand for my worship a perfectly human Deity; that is to say, a Deity who is so intent upon rescuing every creature He has made from the everlasting death and damnation he bears about in himself *as finitely constituted*, as not to shrink if need be from humbling Himself to every patient form of ignominy, and feeding contentedly year in and year out, century after century, and millennium after millennium, upon the literal breath of our self-righteous

contempt. In short I hold the only Deity worthy a human being's worship to be the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ; to be the Divinity revealed in that perfect Humanity; a Divinity so incapable of all selfish regards, so poor in every sentiment and resource of personal pride, as eternally to hide Himself under the natural conceit and tyranny and lust of His own creatures, if thereby He may spiritually woo and win them to their immortal blessedness, in the free participation of His infinite goodness wisdom and power.

Surely there is nothing in this statement which my reader's intelligence is not prepared to ratify. No one of my readers is capable of feeling the least respect for an idle God, any more than for an idle man. Every one respects labor; every one respects the man who does something more to vindicate his human quality, than just live upon his inheritance, or accumulated ancestral fat. And every one despises idleness; every one despises the man, who, being endowed as every man is by his maker with one talent or two talents or ten talents as the case may be, yet buries this Divine endowment in a napkin instead of putting it out to profitable use. And the ground upon which these judgments proceed, is sufficiently obvious. It is that our sentiment of human worth is violated, when we see one's strictly original or spiritual force, one's God-given *self*, left out of one's life; when we see a man content like a pig to live and die as passively as he was begotten and born; content

to wear the livery of his splendid but tyrannous organization, instead of compelling that organization into the unstinted service of his own ineffable spiritual needs.

The natural inheritance of every one who is capable of spiritual life, is an unsubdued forest where the wolf howls and every obscene bird of night chatters; so that his very manhood is contingent upon his subduing this inheritance to light and air, and making it yield, instead of its wild and poisonous undergrowths, every fruit good for food. Every man who has reached even his intellectual teens begins to suspect this; begins to suspect that life is no farce; that it is not genteel comedy even; that it flowers and fructifies on the contrary out of the profoundest tragic depths. All that is distinctive in human culture betrays an ever present conflict between the inner and outer life, between the private and public soul, and exhibits in itself that conflict reconciled. Whatsoever is noblest in human character, best in human action, most permanent in human achievement, most renowned in art, tells only of obstacles overcome, of difficulties toilsomely vanquished, in short of hell patiently subjugated to heaven, or evil reconciled to good, in some higher neutral and therefore positive quantity which men would never have otherwise divined. Even the least human of our endowments which is visible beauty, beauty that the senses can measure, disdains a passive genesis, proclaims itself the *immediate* offspring of a marriage between inward soul and outward body.

An exquisitely regular face is not apt to be an interesting one, because the mere mechanics of beauty are almost sure to prevail in it over the dynamics, over the free breezy play of soul which gives that mechanism life and puts it in exhilarating motion. It is the gaunt preliminary framework of the house, rather than the sunny completed house itself. It is the skeleton of beauty without the warm blood and rounded flesh which alone make the skeleton presentable. Indeed our experience often witnesses that the most victorious beauty to the heart, rises sheer out of the lap of ugliness, exhibits the rich expressive soul giving endless aggrandizement to the poor penurious body.

But I have no need to heap up illustrations of my position, since my reader knows as well as I that nothing turns out permanently valuable either in character or in performance, which it does not cost blood of the mind or blood of the body to produce. I only want in fact to signalize to the reader's mind this indisputable quality of human worth, *the highest worth we recognize*, in order to claim for Deity the actual perfection of such worth; in order to show in other words that such being our most characteristic virtue as spiritually conjoined with God, namely, to disregard self, or freely consume it in our devotion to truth and beauty: such *must* be the characteristic perfection of our creative source: under penalty of the creature having failed to image his creator. If, as the good book avers, the blood constitute the life; if, in other words man is pronounced

man by the supremacy of his heart to his head, or his power of self-abandonment to what is not himself: then God as being the height of all character, must be the essential perfection of heart, the absolute infinitude of love: *i. e.* must be creative. For this is the essential implication of an infinite love, that it have so little regard for self as of necessity to alienate, or communicate to another, what is its own; as eternally to make itself over in fact to what is not itself, to what indeed is diametrically hostile to itself.

CHAPTER IV.

Now it is just this *essentially* creative aspect of the Divine perfection, just this very infinitude of the Divine Love, regarded not as a passive but as an active quantity; not as an idle ornamental fixture of the Divine name, but as the actual working-force of all the effects of the universe, turning every thing into miracle: which Natural Religion blinks wholly out of sight, and which Revelation alone discloses to philosophic recognition. Revelation makes *creation*, as contradistinguished from *redemption*, a purely objective work of God, consisting in such a complete surrender of Himself to the creature, as that the total honor and glory of His name shall be submerged, and nothing emerge but the boundless pride of the human heart, and the boundless folly of the human mind. And clearly Philosophy regarded as the exponent of creation, as the voucher of the Infinite and Absolute in the finite and relative, is deaf to any lower inspiration than this. Not alone Philosophy indeed, but common sense, prescribes that the creature, simply because he *is* a creature, *i. e. another* than God, must be in himself or subjectively considered, the total unflinching and intense opposite of God. His very nature as a creature, his

intrinsic aptitude, is death; just as that of his creator is life. In this state of things, how shall he ever become *self*-conscious, unless *this very death* which he is in himself, or naturally and apart from the creator, become organized in *living* form, in forms at all events of *quasi* or phenomenal life: unless in other words the creator condescend to the native limitations of the creature, and give him *subjective* or *conscious* being, by Himself unstintedly quickening all his intrinsic ignorance poverty and imbecility?

The creature as such *must* be, in himself or naturally, the exact inversion of what the creator is in Himself; impotent where He is omnipotent, ignorant where He is omniscient, replete with evil where He is perfect in good: the exact office of the creative substance or energy being to make this natural wilderness of the creature the blossoming and fruitful garden of His own power and wisdom and goodness. The indispensable condition of the creature's self-consciousness is that the creator actually *come down* to his level, by *organizing his endless natural want*, or quickening it with His own deathless substance. The creator must not merely intellectually acquiesce in this natural infirmity, this intrinsic death or destitution of the creature, as the creature's rightful and inalienable heritage, as in fact the sole inexpugnable basis of his identity: He must also cordially accept it *as the only possible basis of His own redemptive exploits*, the only and all-sufficient argument and opportunity of His own matchless

power and wisdom. Creation would be a manifest contradiction on any lower terms. Were the creature good in himself and not evil; were he naturally like God in place of being wholly unlike Him; then he would *be* God and not himself: for what is good in itself, or what of its own nature is like God, *is* God, and cannot therefore be created. Thus the fundamental condition of a true creation is, that it first of all permit the creature to expand to the fullest extent of his native or intrinsic worthlessness; that it make him perfectly cognizant in other words of his essential imbecility and evil. We should otherwise lack every conceivable guarantee of the validity of creation; because in that case the creature would remain forever destitute of true or genuine self-consciousness, consequently of every thing which could possibly separate him from Deity. In short whatever is logically implied in his nature as a created or finite being, *must* come to consciousness within him so as really to constitute him to his own intelligence; otherwise he will never get the slightest projection from his creative source: *i. e.* the slightest experience of himself: and consequently far from being a man, he will not even be a mineral. The very infinitude of the Divine power prevents Him giving being to the creature without the implication of an organized natural selfhood; the actuality of the creation bearing the strictest ratio to the validity of this selfhood; *i. e.* being contingent upon the creature freely exhibiting in himself the exact total

and uncompromising opposite of every Divine perfection.

Such undeniably is the limitation which the creature imposes upon the creative power. And one sees at a glance that the limitation is fatal, unless the creator possess really infinite resources. To make creation at all conceivable the creator must be animated by a love without limit to the creature: for how can we conceive of a finite love communicating itself to what is intrinsically hostile or repugnant to itself? Finite love is self-love; since nothing limits the love we bear to others but the love we bear ourselves; and if consequently there were the least taint of self-love in the creator, creation would have been impossible. For the creature is necessarily (*i. e.* by the exigency of his own identity) antagonistic to the creator; and it is absurd to suppose self-love capable of originating things contrary to itself. It is in fact the exact distinction between God's love and ours, that the former is essentially creative, the latter destructive.

There is no way of denying the creative infinitude but by denying the creative holiness. If you choose to say that lying, adultery and murder are akin to the heart of God, then of course you may argue that creation costs Him nothing; is in fact a mere flurry of His pent-up idle force liable to be as capriciously undone as it was capriciously begun: but not otherwise. If you believe that these things are infinitely contrary to the heart of God: if you believe that God has never been soothed but always

outraged by the envy and the malice, by the subtle perfidy and the open rancor, which have envenomed human intercourse in all the past; then you must admit that the love which goes to the creation of man, in whom all these odious things *naturally* inhere, and to the endowing him with the sceptre of universal dominion, is really infinite; since it cannot go forth save in the way of its own eternal humiliation.

In very truth this altogether unobtrusive fact of self hood or natural life which we are all born to, and which we therefore think nothing of but accept as a mere matter of course, is itself the eternal marvel of creation. We ourselves can modify existence almost at pleasure; we can change the form of existing things; *i. e.* can convert natural forms into artificial ones. But we cannot confer life; cannot make these artificial forms self-conscious or living. We can turn a block of wood into a table, a block of stone into a statue; but our work in no wise reflects the vivacity of Nature, because we not being life in ourselves, cannot possibly communicate life to the work of our hands. We frame a beautiful effigy of life; but the effigy remains forever uninhabited, forever irresponsive to the love which fashions it; in short forever unconscious or dead.

Now the splendor of the creative activity is, that it makes even this effigy of itself alive with the amplest life; its product being no cold inanimate statue, but a living breathing exulting person. In short the everlasting miracle is that

God is able, in giving us Himself, to endow us with our own finite selfhood as well; leaving us thereby so unidentified with Himself, so utterly free and untrammelled to our own consciousness as to be able very often seriously to doubt, and not seldom permanently to deny His own existence. And this miracle I say is utterly inexplicable upon any *datum* but that I have alleged, namely: that God is so truly infinite in love as not to shrink from shrouding His uncreated splendor in His creature's lineaments, from eternally humiliating Himself to the lowest possibilities of creaturely imbecility and iniquity, in order that the creature may thus become freely or spiritually elevated to the otherwise impracticable heights of His majestic wisdom and goodness.

I ask no indulgence of my reader for this language. I literally mean what I say, that creation is absolutely contingent upon the Divine ability to humble Himself to the creature's level, to diminish Himself to the creature's *natural* dimensions. Language is incapable of painting too vividly the strength of my convictions on this subject. If the creature by the bare fact of his creatureship be demonstrably void of life in himself, then the creator can only succeed in rescuing him from this intrinsic death, and elevating him to Himself, by first abasing Himself to the creature; *i. e.* allowing His proper infinitude or perfection to be so swallowed up in the other's proper finiteness or imperfection, as never by any possibility to

come into the least overt collision with it. Thus whenever I draw a breath or perform any automatic function; when I see or hear or smell or taste or touch; when I hunger or thirst; when I think or take cognizance of any truth; when I glow with passion; when I do good or evil to my fellow-man; my ability in all these cases is due exclusively to that great truth clearly revealed in Christianity, and revealed nowhere else, in fact utterly denied everywhere else, namely: that God's love to me is so truly *infinite*, *i. e.* untainted by the least admixture of love to Himself, as to permit Him within the entire periphery of my consciousness physical intellectual and moral, to veil Himself so effectually from sight, to obscure and as it were annihilate Himself so completely on my behalf, that I cannot help *feeling* myself to exist absolutely or irrespectively of Him, and enjoy a conscious ability not only to do what is congruous with His ultimate good pleasure in me, but to abound if I please at any moment in all manner of profane injurious and filthy behavior.

In short and to sum up all I have said in one word: the interests of the creature's natural identity are the paramount concern of the creative Love. To establish these interests on an impregnable basis, and so make them eternally tributary to the creature's spiritual individuality, constitute it may be said the sole burden of the creative Wisdom. It is manifestly impossible that the creature should ever realize that spiritual conjunction with the creator which is life,

unless he first exist in some form of his own; unless he get at all events a *quasi* projection from, or disjunction with, the creator by coming to a veracious consciousness. And existence or consciousness is impossible of course, unless NATURAL selfhood be allowed him, unless, in other words, *that common principle of destitution which characterizes all creatures*, regarded in themselves or intrinsically and apart from the Divine conjunction, become *vivified* by the creative bounty, and so furnish a valid ground of consciousness to him, on which any amount of spiritual intercourse between him and his creator may subsequently be transacted. My *nature* expresses what I have in common with all other existence, thus what gives me *identity: i. e.* what forever fixes or finites me to my own consciousness, and to others' regard; and without this natural root I should be utterly incapable of that rational growth and spiritual flowering or fructification which we call individuality or character. All true character in me, all my distinctive individuality, is what the heat of God's goodness and the light of His truth alone bring forth out of that subterranean root: so that without His tender and solicitous nourishment arresting its downward growth and giving it a contrary direction, the root would stretch evermore and irresistibly downward to the lowest hell.

But here lies the practical difficulty to which I have already adverted, as calling for all the resources of the Divine infinitude to overcome

it. The very nature of the creature puts such an obstacle in the way of creation, that unless the creative Love were really infinite, that is, wholly unlimited by self-love, it would be impossible to vanquish it. For manifestly the essential nature of the creature as a creature, *i. e.* as a being wholly dependent upon another than himself, is what alone gives him identity, by stamping him at once as the total opposite of God, or declaring him to be absolutely non-existent, intrinsically full of death, incapable of being. His nature is *not*-to-be, just as God's *is* to-be: so that he cannot possibly begin to be, until this very nature of his has been Divinely quickened, or raised from death to life. The first care of the creator is to give the creature identity, or eternal projection from Himself; and what we call his nature, *i. e.* what he possesses *in common* with all existence, is the only possible or veracious ground of this identity. But the nature of the creature, what he has in common with all existence, is an utter intrinsic destitution of life, is an intrinsic plenitude of death so to speak. It is therefore manifestly impossible for the Divine Love to give actual being to the creature, with any regard to the latter's conscious permanence or identity, unless this very death which is the substance of the created nature become taken up into some superior form of life; unless this very destitution which is the sole badge of the creature's identity, and the sole guarantee of the veracity of his consciousness, be Divinely glorified into some form of

spiritual abundance. The creative power of course encounters no spiritual obstacle, because manifestly the creature is spiritually null or non-existent and unconscious, until he has been first of all *naturally* vivified: *i. e.* until that invincible subjection to death which his very nature lays him under, has been previously vanquished by the Divine power, and corruption given place to incorruption.

Natural religion is of course indifferent to all these considerations of method or order in the Divine creation. It regards creation not as a rational or orderly procession of the Divine spirit into every appropriate form of manifestation; but as a mere brute display of physical power on God's part, the same in kind but different in degree from that we attribute to the conjuror or magician. Magical power, the power of bringing something out of nothing, is the sole conception the natural religionist entertains of the Divine activity; he regards the physical constitution of things as a wholly arbitrary or unconditioned product of the Divine will, and supposes it undesigned to minister to any deeper consciousness in us than that of sense.

It is in fact the prerogative of Revelation to assert this great redemption of human nature, as the inmost scope and substance of God's creative energy. Revelation alone shows us how God is able to invest His creature with a selfhood which shall be indisputably his own, and so inexorably separate him to all eternity from his creator, even while inviting and engaging the

most intimate spiritual conjunction with Him. It does this by sharply separating between the conscious and the unconscious realm of life in man, or proving that our moral righteousness is in every case an inverse, and not a direct, measure of our spiritual relation to God. This is the great commanding light which Revelation bestows upon the intellect; and unless Philosophy therefore consent to accept its guidance, she will remain hereafter as thoroughly incompetent to the conduct of the mind as she has always proved herself hitherto; and must erelong definitively avow herself, what all her recent aspirations bind her to become, the humble, besotted, and yet most superfluous waiting-maid of Science.

Let us examine however with some attention the existing attitude of Philosophy with respect to the fundamental verity of an actual creation.

CHAPTER V.

To create a thing means obviously to give it inward substance or being; but as nothing can inwardly *be* unless it also outwardly *exist*, or go forth in its proper form, so consequently when God is said to create or give being to things, it is manifestly implied that He gives them their own distinctive form or selfhood as well. In a word the idea of objective creation philosophically involves or presupposes a subordinate process of subjective formation or redemption; because otherwise the creature must fail to attain to that conscious identity, or projection from his creative source, which is essential to the integrity and actuality of the creative work.

It is the business of Philosophy to vindicate this invariable implication of form in substance to popular regard. For everywhere the uninstructed mind demands how any such experience as this I have just painted, should ever actually arise? This consciousness of selfhood in the creature, how shall it ever be able to attain to veracity? How shall it ever be able practically to come about? If the creature be the abject and utterly dependent offspring of the Divine power, how is it possible that He should ever feel in the slightest measure that sentiment of

purely personal force and dignity, which throbs in every pulse of morality? If my being lie most distinctly in another than myself, how shall I ever have the power to say, or even to think, *me mine, thee thine, him his, i. e.* to project myself to such a distance both from my creative source and my fellow-creature, as to feel my own inextinguishable property in myself, and inevitably to claim the responsibility of my own actions? In short how shall creation ever become actual, ever prove anything more than a form of imperfect human thought, than a figure of delusive human speech?

All these questions, I say, which are the bane of the popular understanding, it is the business of Philosophy alone to elucidate; for Philosophy assumes to be the exponent intellectually of creation, or to reconcile God and man. From the beginning of history the aim of Philosophy has been to avouch the purely spiritual origin and quality of life; to assert the underlying infinitude which embeds all finite existence, and lifts it eventually out of the chaos it is in itself, into the foundations of a lustrous city worthy the eternal King to inhabit. Philosophy is thus a most strict demonstration of the Infinite within the finite, of the Absolute within the relative; and her very existence accordingly should bind her to permit, much more to offer, no damage to the minor interest. If the Infinite and Absolute dwell within the finite and relative as the soul dwells within the body, that is to say, not spatially indeed or mechanically as a tenant

dwells within a house, or a sword in its scabbard, but spiritually or dynamically as the cause dwells within the effect, or life within the subject of life, or thought within speech: then of course Philosophy is bound to cherish the finite and relative with peculiar tenderness, not on their own account primarily of course, but because they alone house and they alone reveal that transcendent substance whereby she lives.

But now how actually stands the case with Philosophy? Does Philosophy as at present constituted appear to feel any longer the force of these ancient obligations? Not a whit. She is on the contrary utterly faithless to them. Either with Kant and Sir William Hamilton she pusillanimously evades them, by denying the veracity of our knowledge of the finite, and hence putting our belief of the Infinite upon a mere arbitrary basis, authority; or else with Hegel she audaciously vacates them, by denying the duality of infinite and finite, of God and man; so converting what we have been wont to deem a sincere work of creation into a frivolous game of bo-peep on God's part, seeking to come to the consciousness of His proper infinitude by undergoing the temporary imprisonment and obscuration of the finite. Creation thus caricatured claims of course no more essential dignity than the chase of the kitten after its own tail. Sir William Hamilton justly enough regards "the science of the absolute" in Hegel's hands as a mere dodge of the difficulties accruing to Philosophy from the Kantian metaphysics. Yet

even that dodge is in my opinion greatly less discreditable to its authors, and evinces a far more sagacious feeling of the needs of Philosophy, than Sir William's own shallow and boisterous effort to push these metaphysics to their last gasp of absurdity.

The way Sir William Hamilton, following Kant, takes to demonstrate the incompetency of Philosophy to justify our religious instincts, or formulate a doctrine of creation which shall be adequate to satisfy the demands of the intellect, is by showing that we are incapable of arriving at the infinite in knowledge, save by the utter degradation and demolition of the finite. He insists upon the internecine hostility of Infinite and finite, of God and nature, with such heartiness of good will, as to make out that the reality of the one in knowledge is inevitably fatal to that of the other; the relation between them being not reciprocally affirmative but simply contradictory. He takes the greatest pains to show that we must necessarily ignore the infinite and absolute merely *because* we know the finite and relative: since the latter exclude the former instead of revealing them. In fact he devoted his lively powers to such a thorough degradation of our knowledge, as makes it no longer a trust-worthy instrument and vehicle — I will not say of revealed or spiritual truth alone, but — even of the lowest sensual information: and then called the ghastly residuum Philosophy. Thus according to Sir William's showing Philosophy excludes us not only from the

heavenly bread which has hitherto been our nutriment, not only from the fatted calf of the paternal mansion, but also from the very husks which the swine themselves eat, under the plea that the whole thing is a delusion and mockery of true nourishment.

The fundamental axiom of the Kantian metaphysics, which is the spring-board of all Sir William Hamilton's speculative agility, is that the forms of our sensibility and intelligence so dominate the *data* of our knowledge as to leave us utterly ignorant of "real" existence, thus forcing us upon scepticism as the highest culture. The forms of our intelligence so modify the contents of sense and reason, that we know nothing truly, *i. e.* as it is *in itself*, but only phenomenally or as it appears under the shaping and depraving influence of our own faculties. Sir William Hamilton not only accepted this dapper little pedantry as the consummate deliverance of Philosophy, as the true measure of our intelligence, but he disgorged all the accumulations of his plethoric memory, and lavished every secretion of his frenzied faculty of nomenclature, to illustrate and universalize it. The intellectual heart of the philosopher grew so superfluous upon this delirious diet, that he at last fancied himself doing his fellow-men a service rather than an injury, in persuading them that they could have no true knowledge of God *even by means of a direct revelation from Himself.* A God, he says, who is capable of being intelligently recognized, is no God at all. Even

God's own good-will is shown to be powerless in the premises: *i. e.* will avail to make us know Him, not as He is in truth, but only as He contrives to *appear* in some fallacious effigy approximate to our intelligence. It of course results that any absolutely trustworthy knowledge of God either as creator, redeemer or administrator of the world, is intellectually visionary and presumptuous, and each of us is left accordingly to such conceptions of the Divine Name as ignorance and superstition, which alone rule in the absence of knowledge and true philosophy, suggest.

But let us look a little more closely at our subject. The soul of Kant's egregious discrimination of *noumena* from phenomena, is that things are their own (unintelligible) substance as well as their own (intelligible) form. Both Kant and Sir William Hamilton conceive every thing under two modes: one substantial, which is the *thing-in-itself;* the other formal, which is not the thing as it is in itself, but only as it *appears* under the modifying and misleading lights of our intelligence. Thus the horse passing my window at this moment is *in-himself* or really, his own unintelligible substance; but in us, that is, through the modifying and indeed most magical forms of our understanding, he becomes converted from reality into phenomenality: in other words, from unintelligible becomes intelligible. And they both maintain that do what we will, even with God helping us, we can never know the "real" animal, but only this

base sophisticated one. Indeed they will not even permit themselves to postulate so much as existence for these quizzical *noumena*; authorizing only the most rapid mental glimpse of them in the interest of that overpowering scepticism which they conceive to be due to *phenomena*. Hence these jolly philosophers conclude, that our knowledge being so uncertain, nay, so directly misleading in respect to the truth of things, as to be far less honorable to us than our ignorance, *is unworthy to base any assured system of beliefs:* so that Philosophy, which is the science of belief, incontinently confesses herself under this compulsion exanimate or empty for want of subject matter to fill her out. In plain English, the decrepit old dame tumbles into such ecstasies of alarm at the voice of the stout unfilial footpads, whom her own penurious paps have starved into matricide, as instantly to surrender all she is traditionally worth, in order to save her henceforth worthless life.

What is the intellectual motive of all this talk on the part of Kant and his follower Sir William Hamilton, about "things-in-themselves" or *noumena* as constituting the only realities, while their phenomenal apparitions in sense and reason are respectively unreal? Their motive is honorable. It is to get rid thereby of the traditional conception of creation, and so discharge Philosophy of a burden to which in their estimation she is incompetent, that namely of avouching the Infinite and Absolute in knowledge. Both Kant and Sir William Hamilton

entertained a purely scientific conception of creation, never for an instant a philosophic one, the conception which science inherits from Natural Religion, and which makes creation a work of God in space and time; *i. e.* to consist in endowing things with finite or at most relative existence; so sundering them forever from the immortal being they have in God. Of course any such beggarly style of existence as this must confess itself unvivified by the Highest; and Philosophy therefore as the science of being must confess herself nonplussed. By the showing of these bastard disciples accordingly Philosophy is *not*, what all her legitimate children have hitherto deemed her, namely: a perfect intellectual justification of the religious instinct, the instinct which prompts mankind to aspire after an intimate and exact knowledge of God. On the contrary, she declares herself in their hands a remorseless traitor both to religion and to science, in avouching the utter fatuity of our knowledge. Our knowledge — if we believe these exquisitely fuddled adepts — exercises such a witchery over its own contents, that it is imprudent to confide in it except when it is inert. For the moment it is exerted it imposes such a change upon the thing known, that the thing becomes at once and adroitly converted from the "real" thing, or *thing-in-itself*, into a mere changeling substituted by the fairy forms of our sensibility and intelligence. Thus our knowledge is no longer a figurative confession of our ignorance, but, according to Sir William Ham-

ilton especially, who is merely Kant gone to seed, a *literal* demonstration of it. It fell to Sir William's lot to utter a vast deal of error upon every metaphysic topic he broached; but it all aspired to this triumphantly paralytic result, namely: — not that our actual knowledge quantitatively viewed, or as measured against the still remaining depths of our ignorance, sinks into vanity: this is an obvious dictate of common sense: but — that knowledge itself qualitatively viewed, or regarded *as* knowledge, IS IGNORANCE: since whatsoever is known becomes by that fact unreal, and whatsoever is real becomes by that fact unknown and unknowable. For example: there *may* be such a being as God; there *may* be such an existence as a horse: but Philosophy does not and cannot say whether there is or is not. All that she is able to say intelligently is, that if either the one or the other object does *really* exist, it will be forever prevented by that fact from becoming known: because knowledge has no relation to real things, but only to the ghosts or apparitions of real things.

Into such bewildered gabble as this have "the lispings of divine Philosophy" become transmuted at last! Would you not infer that Kant and Sir William Hamilton, but especially Sir William, who is as vivacious in absurdity as Kant is dull and operose, propose no other destiny for Philosophy than to reduce her to the dimensions of an intricate "Irish bull"?

However this may be, Philosophy by the

showing of her most approved disciples has plainly reached a crisis in her history, such a crisis as augurs either an everlasting and most righteous entombment for her, or else a speedy resurrection. In place of giving us as she once aspired to do, improved conceptions of the highest themes, she sets herself to deny us the power of conceiving of any theme save in a puerile misleading way. She not only extrudes us intellectually from the actual though rude home which has hitherto sheltered us from the weather, but she turns us into a set of disreputable despairing tramps eternally incapable of *any* home: starving with a most vital cold and hunger, and yet knocking at the doors of our intellectual grandees only to get informed by some authentic supercilious Yellowplush, that bed and board are in the very nature of things illusory goods, which every philosophic outcast and vagabond ought to be above seriously coveting. In short in thus unsettling the principles of our knowledge Philosophy *à fortiori* exposes our most assured beliefs to an utter downfall; for belief rests upon knowledge as a house rests upon its foundation.

Decidedly then one owes no apology to Philosophy for saying that she is at the turning-point of her destiny, and that unless she gather herself up out of the mire in which she is wallowing, it will soon be all over with her. It is true that Kant devolves upon the moral instinct, as Sir William Hamilton devolves upon a blind faith, the duty from which they severally absolve

Philosophy, that of conducting men to the Infinite in knowledge. But what is this but to exhibit Philosophy transferring to other hands her own appropriate office of mediating between heaven and earth, between religion and science, between truth and fact, between life and existence, while she herself urges upon us instead a lesson of abject helpless scepticism with reference to both interests? Philosophy proper according to both of these authorities utterly refuses any longer to function, being incapable even of *recognizing* any infinite or any finite, any absolute or any relative, much more of reconciling them in eternal amity. Suppose you should instruct your attorney to sue a certain person for the recovery of moneys due, and the attorney should reply that there was such a hopeless dislocation to his mind between you and your debtor, such an ever growing indistinctness of boundary between the parties, as to make it impossible for him to conceive where creditor ended and debtor began: would you not say, my friend, you are manifestly drunk and unfit for business? When Philosophy then presents herself in precisely similar plight, so drunken with the new wine of science as to renounce her own sober heavenly speech, and attempt putting off upon us this desperate and maudlin cant *of the highest reason being ever the highest uncertainty, and the truest knowledge the truest ignorance*, let us scourge the brazen trollop from our doors, and give her prison fare till she mends her manners.

I know that a fashionable scepticism prevails just now among learned doctors, as to the ability of Philosophy to recover from her long debauch, and vindicate by future services the essential divinity of her origin. *M. Auguste Comte* for example who styled himself, and what is even more extraordinary believed himself, *fondateur de la religion de l'humanité*, and his greatly more sprightly disciple Mr. G. H. Lewes, author of *The Biographical History of Philosophy*, do not hesitate to deride any such possibility, and pronounce the illustrious sufferer already dead. But both of these gentlemen exhibit so very jolly a demeanor upon the occasion, leering at such a rate, as Dr. Wilkinson has observed,[1] upon the chambermaids, and thrusting their tongues so significantly into their cheeks at the bystanders, that you at once detect the evidence of some foregone conclusion, or at all events distrust the judgment of an intelligence which begins in so little sympathy. M. Comte especially whatever may have been his merits as a scientific observer, upon which I am utterly unskilled to pronounce, was ludicrously devoid of philosophic insight. He so persistently rubbed the nose of his intelligence in the mud of mere Existence, so wilfully restricted its complacent feet to paddling in the shallowest waters of Fact, that he became obdurately blind to all the higher problems of Life and Truth, and ended by running the stupendous edifice of human destiny into a thing of such

[1] See his striking Review of Lewes' *History of Philosophy*, in *The Democratic Review* of some ten years since.

abjectly culinary dimensions as would revolt even the imagination of a cook. It was the case of a serious-minded conceited hodman fancying himself an architect, and aspiring to construct a new Alhambra or St. Peter's.

No man of Comte's intellectual make has the slightest title to prejudice the question in hand, because he has no apprehension of the spiritual uses of Philosophy, which alone supply the clew to its solution. The grand use of Philosophy is to promote the spiritual understanding in man, by disengaging the infinite in human conception from the grasp of the finite, or what is the same thing, revealing the latent harmony which prevails between being and seeming, between substance and form, between spirit and flesh. Evidently then the very first requisite to a competent judgment of Philosophy is, that one believe in the Infinite at least *as much as* he believes in the finite, or be quite as unwilling to see religion merge in science as to see science absorbed by religion. None of these men fulfil this condition. They all admit the Finite, but they scout the Infinite out of sight as a rational cognition. They perfectly believe in science, but they have a total disbelief in religion save as an early necessity of the scientific intellect, or at best a courteous doffing of the hat to Deity. They are consequently all alike incompetent to estimate the grandly reconciling genius and function of Philosophy, just as incompetent as a one-legged man would be to run a race, or a one-eyed man to appreciate the stereoscope. It is

ludicrous to suppose Philosophy endangered by any amount of such lap-sided hostility: you might as well fancy a clear-shining candle in danger of extinction from the widowed moiety of an original pair of snuffers.

As I have already intimated a much less famous but in my opinion very superior man to either of these great men or indeed to all of them put together, has already fulfilled every demand of Philosophy, in strict accordance too with a philosophic temper; that is, without either cowardice or bravado. Swedenborg disperses all the shallow sciolism we have been discussing, by solidly vindicating the philosophic basis of creation. He demonstrates that the sole real existence, the only possible ground of consciousness, for the creature in so far as he is a creature, is phenomenal; thus virtually scourging the conception of *noumenal* existence as distinguished from phenomenal forever out of sight. He demonstrates beyond the possibility of a rational cavil that the pretension of *noumenal* existence on the part of a creature, the pretension to possess *existence-in-himself*, is absurd or contradictory; and so turns Philosophy from a suicidal chase of phantoms into a living and loving recognition of the Infinite within the very bosom of the finite, of the Absolute within the very bosom of the relative.

The total problem of Philosophy is, to reconcile freedom with dependence; or to show how finite may be incessantly vivified by infinite, without necessary inflation to the lower interest

or necessary collapse to the higher: in short with reciprocal advantage to both interests. This problem I delight to repeat has been for the first time in the intellectual history of the race, virtually solved by Emanuel Swedenborg. This great man perfectly vindicates what is at once the eternal truth and the eternal marvel of creation, by proving to us that God *is* able to endow his creature with selfhood, or make him the unquestionable source of his own actions, not only without in the least degree vitiating, but while actually intensifying the creature's dependence upon Himself. And he does this with no metaphysical straining or scholastic posturing, such as fatigue you to death in the pages of the philosophic eunuchs whose shrill discordant voices alone possess the public ear: but simply by alleging the Divine infinitude not indeed as an irrational quantity or faculty of endless *hocus-pocus*, but as the most actual and intelligible working-power of the universe; and by deducing therefrom those spiritual laws, the conditions of man's true being as natural laws are those of his phenomenal being, to which alone we must look henceforward for an answer to every question touching human freedom or human destiny.

In thus avowing my intellectual obligations to Swedenborg's writings, I have no wish to conceal my honest sense of their conventional literary limitations. I fully concede indeed to Swedenborg what is usually denied him, namely, an extreme sobriety of mind displayed under

all the exceptional circumstances of his career, and which ends by making us feel at last his every word to be almost insipid with veracity. I cordially appreciate moreover the rare destitution of wilfulness which characterizes all his researches; or rather the childlike docility of spirit which leads him to seek and to recognize under all the most contradictory aspects of nature, the footsteps of the Highest. But I should be sorry to commend him to the attention of our mere men-of-letters. There seems a ludicrous incongruity for example between his grim sincere performances and the enamelled offspring of Mr. Tennyson's muse, or the ground-and-lofty-tumbling of an accomplished literary acrobat like Macaulay. It is evident that he himself never once dreamed of conciliating so dainty a judgment. It would be like trying the mainsail of a man-of-war by a cambric handkerchief. His books are a dry unimpassioned unexaggerated exposition of the things he daily saw and heard in the world of spirits, and of the spiritual laws which these things illustrate; with scarcely any effort whatever to blink the obvious outrage his experiences offer to sensuous prejudice, or to conciliate any interest in his reader which is not prompted by the latter's own original and unaffected relish of the truth. Such sincere books it seems to me were never before written. He grasped with clear intellectual vision the seminal principles of things, and hence is never tempted to that dreary Socratic ratiocination about their shifting super-

ficial appearances, which give great talkers a repute for knowledge. Full however as his books are on this account of the profoundest philosophic interest, they naturally contribute almost nothing to one's scientific advantage. You need never go to them for any *direct* help upon existing social or scientific problems. You might as well go to a waving wheat-field to demand a loaf of bread. Just as in the latter case before getting one's loaf, one would be obliged to harvest his wheat and convert it into flour, and then convert the flour itself into dough, and afterwards allow the dough to ferment before putting it in the oven and baking his bread: so in the former case before getting the slightest scientific aid from Swedenborg, he will be obliged first of all intellectually to harvest his spiritual principles, and then gradually bring them down through the hopper of his imperious daily needs, and under the guidance of the great truth of human equality or fellowship, into social and personal applications wholly unforeseen I doubt not and perhaps undreamt of by the author himself.

CHAPTER VI.

Our business however does not lie with Swedenborg himself in any degree, but with his doctrine of Nature, or the very direct and enormous bearing which his disclosures of spiritual laws exert upon Philosophy. I say emphatically his doctrine of Nature: for although it is true that Nature in Swedenborg's view occupies a strictly subordinate position with respect to Spirit, the position indeed of a foundation with respect to its superstructure, it is none the less, therefore, but only all the more true, that upon the infinitude of the Divine power as exhibited primarily in the natural sphere of creation, will depend the infinitude of His love and wisdom as they are subsequently to be disengaged in the spiritual sphere.

The most fundamental of all the laws of spiritual existence upon which Swedenborg insists, is that of the strict *involution* of the natural world in the spiritual, so as that the former could no more exist without the latter, than an effect could exist without a cause, a glove without a hand, a mould without a substance to be moulded, a skin without a something to be covered; nor the latter subsist without the former any

more than a cause could subsist without an effect, a soul without a body, affection without thought, thought without speech, speech without organs. "All natural goods and truths," he says, "exist and descend from celestial and spiritual goods and truths; for there is not a single natural good and truth which does not exist from a spiritual good, which itself exists from a celestial good; and by these also it subsists. Were the spiritual world to recede from the natural, the natural world would cease to be. The origin of the universe is in this wise: All things in general and particular, are from the Lord: from Him is the celestial man; through the celestial again the spiritual; through the spiritual in its turn, the natural; and through the natural the corporeal and sensual man. And as each thus exists or goes forth from the Lord, so also each subsists or endures by Him: for subsistence, as is known, is perpetual existence."[1]

"The sensual life is the lowest or ultimate form of human life: and what is the lowest or ultimate contains all higher or interior things, and is their *common* ground or covering, for they terminate in it and so rest upon it. The case is similar with the skin, which being the outmost integument of the body, and therefore the continent of all its interior things, these latter terminate in it and thus rest upon it. Similar also is the case with the peritoneum in the body, in which the abdominal viscera are enveloped:

[1] Arc. Cel., 775.

these also rest upon it, and have a common tie with it; as the thoracic viscera have also with the pleura. The case is similar also with respect to the things of the intellect and will in man. There is in these things an orderly succession from interior to exterior; *exterior* things being the pursuits and pleasures of science, while *extreme* things are the sensual delights which communicate with the world, by the organs of sight hearing taste smell and touch: upon these, interior things rest, because in these they terminate. It is to be observed moreover that all things in whole and in part from the First or Inmost proceed successively to their ultimates, and there rest. Prior or interior things also in successive order are linked with ultimate things, so that if the ultimate things were taken away, the higher or interior would also disappear. Hence also there are three heavens, the inmost or third heaven influencing the middle or second one, and this again influencing the lowest or first heaven, while this last in its turn influences man (on earth): which makes the human race the orderly ultimate in which heaven ends and in which it reposes. It is on this account that the Lord of his Divine mercy always provides that a church may exist with the human race, in which the Divine Truth may be revealed which in our earth is the Word. This revelation affords an enveloping link (*continens nexus*) between the human race and the heavens. Hence it is that throughout the Word an *internal* sense lies hidden, which the angels perceive and which

binds their minds so closely to ours, that both act as one."[1]

If you demand the philosophy of this arrangement, or ask why it is on the one hand that spirit thus *involves* nature as a cause involves its effect, or as soul involves body; and why it is on the other hand that nature *evolves* spirit, as an effect evolves its cause, or as body evolves soul; he will reply by telling you with the utmost profuseness of detail and explanation, that life being spiritual cannot be created but only *communicated;* and in order to such communication some basis must exist adequate to insure it. This is his complete reply to your question, confirmed and illustrated by any amount of learning. God Himself *is* life: so that to *create* life would be to create Himself, which is absurd. He cannot possibly create life consequently, but only communicate it; and in order to His doing so forms must exist adequate to receive the communication, and house it to eternity. Read for example the following passages, which might be indefinitely multiplied.

"Life viewed in itself which is God, cannot create another which shall be life itself, for the life which is God is uncreated continuous and indivisible; whence it is that God is one. But the life which is God can create forms out of substances that are not life, in which it may indwell, making them to seem as if they lived (of themselves). Men are such forms, which, since they are receptacles of life, could not in *the first crea-*

[1] Arc. Cel., 9216.

tion be anything but images and likenesses of God, images from being receptacles of truth and likenesses from being receptacles of good. For life and its recipient subject adjust themselves to each other like active and passive, but do not commingle. Accordingly human forms which are recipients of life, do not live from themselves but from God, who alone is life, wherefore, as is known, all good in the heart and all truth in the intellect is from God. For if the slightest conceivable measure of life belonged to man, he might occupy a meritorious position towards God; whereas if he believe this to be the case, the form recipient of life becomes closed from within, is perverted, and his understanding perishes. Good and the love of it, truth and the belief of it, are the life which is God: for God is good itself and truth itself, and therefore dwells in all good and truth with man. It follows from these premises that man in himself is nothing, and that he is so much only as he receives from the Lord, in the acknowledgment that it is not his own, but the Lord's. In this case the Lord makes him TO BE SOMETHING, though not from himself but from the Lord.

"It appears to man as if he lived from himself; but this is a fallacy. If it were not so, he might have loved God from himself, and been wise from himself. The cause of this appearance with man is, that life inflows from God into his inmost parts, which are remote from the survey of his thought, and hence from perception. Besides, the principal cause which is Life, and the

instrumental cause which is the form recipient of life, act together as one cause; and this action is felt in the instrumental cause, thus in man, as if it were in himself. The fallacy is similar to that by which we feel that the light from which sight comes is in the eye, the sound from which hearing comes is in the ear, and so forth; whereas in truth eyes, ears, and so forth, are organic recipient substances, thus instrumental or subordinate causes, while light, sound, and so forth, are principal causes: which two act together as one, or as active and passive. He who investigates things more profoundly may know that man as to all things in general and in particular, is an organ of life, and that what produces sense and perception flows in *ab extra*, and that it is Life itself (or God) which makes man thus feel and perceive as from himself, or by his own power. Another ground of the fallacious appearance in question, is, that the Divine Love is of such a nature that it would willingly make over to man what is its own; while still teaching him however that it is not from himself, since otherwise he could not be reformed." [1]

"THE DIVINE LOVE AND WISDOM CAN DO NO OTHERWISE THAN BE AND EXIST IN OTHERS CREATED FROM ITSELF. The inmost life of love is, on the one hand, not to love itself but others, and to be conjoined with them in love; and on the other hand to be beloved by others, because conjunction demands reciprocity. The essence of all love, in fact its very life, its agreeableness,

[1] Essay upon the Athanasian Creed, 25, 26.

its pleasantness, its deliciousness, its sweetness, its beatitude, its auspiciousness, its felicity, consists in conjunction. Love consists in this, that we would make over what is our own to another, and feel his pleasure as our own. Such is love. But to enjoy our own pleasure in another, and not his pleasure in ourselves, is not love; for this is to love one's self, and not one's neighbor, which two loves are diametrically opposite. — Hence it is evident that the Divine Love can do no otherwise than be and exist in others whom it loves and by whom it is loved; for if this is true of all finite love, it must be infinitely true of Love itself. With respect to God, it is impossible that He should love, or be loved, by other beings in whom anything of infinite, or of the essence and life of Love-in-itself, that is, anything of Divine, exists; because in that case he would not be beloved by others, but by Himself; for the infinite or Divine is one. If this existed in others than God, it would be God there; and God consequently in place of being Love, would be self-love; whereof not one aspiration is possible to Him, for it is totally opposed to the Divine essence. God's Love accordingly must be addressed to those in whom nothing of Divinity exists."[1]

Now these forms are moulded exclusively by Nature. Nature is that preliminary realm of FORMATION upon which the actuality of creation is suspended. It is the hand of God's power, by means of which His perfect Love and Wisdom

[1] Divine Love and Wisdom, 46–49.

become eternally communicable and communicative. The order of nature accordingly is only a visible picture of interior spiritual realities, or what is the same thing of the growth of the human mind, of its gradual formation out of its intrinsic ignorance and impotence into true knowledge and power, into such form in short as will permanently befit the Divine influx and indwelling. The life of Nature is a struggle upwards from the most wide-weltering *community* or chaos (exemplified in mineral existence) to the most pronounced and concentrated individuality, (exemplified in moral existence). Nature thus culminates in man because the human form which is distinctively moral, alone suffices to afford that perfect natural mould or matrix by means of which the Divine Love evolves the spiritual creation.

If hereupon the inquirer demand of Swedenborg further, how it is that nature becomes separable in this state of things from spirit, or how the mould is kept from identifying itself with the thing moulded, his answer is prompt, namely: that the law of the mould obviously is, *that it be no direct but only an inverse measure of the thing moulded:* in other words, *that nature connects with spirit not by continuity but by correspondence.* Thus the foundation of the house upon which its superstructure is moulded, stretches away downward to Hades, while the superstructure itself mounts upward to heaven. Without this fundamental geometry of high and low, there would be no discrimination of base from

building, consequently no architecture or order, but only a most odious chaos or confusion, leaving us finally to burrow holes in the ground for houses. Precisely so, if moral existence were not an *inverted* form of spiritual existence, rather than a direct or continuous one; that is to say, if it did not bring forth all the creature's native imbecility, *and so characterize him to his own consciousness*: it could afford no basis of identity between him and his fellow man, nor consequently any ground of discrimination between man and God, between creature and creator, but the two would run together in such inextricable confusion that creation would be impossible. Thus the destiny of all natural existence, and especially of the highest form of that existence which is the human or moral form; is to merge in spiritual; to serve merely as the mother earth of that translucent heaven: and we must not fail therefore to hold the two things as invariably inversely related, under penalty of forfeiting all understanding of God's order in creation.

One word more. It is obvious that the perfection of the thing moulded will depend upon the integrity of the mould: the stability of the house and its salubrity upon the strength and dryness of the foundation. Accordingly our spiritual life will be clear and lustrous, just in proportion as the natural experience upon which it proceeds is fully wrought out to its last gasp of possibility; is left in short to itself, to its own legitimate issues. In other words, spiritual life

will become realized by us just in proportion to the intensity of our previous moral life: *i. e.* to the degree in which its intrinsic lusts of pride and covetousness have become developed to our own consciousness, and we ourselves have been led by these discoveries to renounce all hope in ourselves, and confide for life wholly in God. In this case our native arrogance and contempt of others, our love of rule and overbearing manners generally, in short all our natural obduracy and unloveliness, become manifest to our own perception; and while we seem to our own shallow judgment accordingly to be utterly God-forsaken, He is all the while inwardly shaping and building us up in the image of His immortal beauty.

This in substance is Swedenborg's doctrine of Nature, or his view of the essential subordination it bears to God's spiritual ends in creation; all its lower realms being involved in the constitution of man, or serving as the pedestal of moral existence, in order that that existence again may serve in its turn as a basis of spiritual life, life which, being Divine, cannot be created but only communicated. Natural existence is *not* spiritual existence, but only a basis of it; just as the husk of grain or fruit is a basis for its own interior contents, protecting them while they grow and ripen. It is nothing else than a basis, because in proportion as a man's spiritual force augments, his natural force abates; just as the shell of a nut decays as the kernel ripens. Moral existence is often thoughtlessly confound-

ed with spiritual, because it is so dominant a form of natural existence as to seem something apart from it. It is in fact only *a natural form or appearance of spiritual existence:* such an appearance as spiritual existence puts on to the purely sensuous intelligence; while in substance it is strictly natural, being nothing more nor less than the distinctive badge of human nature; every man being constituted a man, that is, a partaker of his nature, exclusively by his morality.

Perhaps the best definition we can make of the difference between spiritual and moral life, will be to say, that the former is spontaneous, or expresses itself from within outwardly, being energized by the marriage of good in the heart with truth in the understanding: while the latter is purely voluntary, or expresses itself from without inwardly, being energized by the supremacy of truth in the understanding to good in the heart. The spiritual subject accordingly is perfectly free, or incapable of coercing himself; for when the heart prompts the understanding, and the understanding seconds the heart, the hand acts as it were unconsciously, or without effort. The moral subject on the other hand, though he claims a felt or *quasi* freedom, has not the least spiritual or real freedom, being perpetually required *to force himself* away from evil towards good: so that however good a matrix or womb of spiritual life his moral consciousness may prove to him, it ought never for a moment to be confounded with it. What is *common* to both forms of life, and what there-

fore renders the one strictly serviceable to the other, is, that they both imply the intensest privacy, the intensest *feeling* of selfhood or individuality in the subject. And what eternally distinguishes them is, that the moral subject, though he *feel himself* to be perfectly free or self-possessed is yet not truly so; his apparent freedom or self-possession being wholly contingent upon an exact balance or equilibrium of good and evil Divinely enforced and maintained *in his nature:* so that if this equilibrium should become deranged by the rise of any bad habit on his part, his apparent freedom or self-sufficiency would merge in the grossest slavery to natural appetite and passion.

But I fear that I am entering too suddenly for the reader's convenience into the heart of things; and that his wishes would be best promoted by a more gradual movement. Let me then suppose the reader opening Swedenborg's books for the first time in total ignorance of what he is to find there; and then proceed to illustrate the probable influence they will exert upon his intelligence, by the effect they have produced upon my own.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT first arrests one's attention even in cursorily surveying Swedenborg's writings, is the necessity we are under, in order to attain to any accurate knowledge of spiritual order, of rectifying certain *rational* prejudices we are wont to cherish in regard to Divine things; just as we are bound, before attaining to a systematic view of cosmical order, to rectify certain *sensuous* prejudices we are under with respect to Nature. If for example we go on to believe as our senses teach us, that the earth is the centre of planetary motion, the planetary orbs being all circumferential to it, we shall never be able satisfactorily to systematize our knowledge, nor consequently to render it fruitful in practical application. So if we accept the testimony of the scientific reason in regard to God and his relation to us as absolute, we shall find our philosophic progress no less hindered than our scientific progress is hindered in the former case. For science controlled by sense, or what is equivalent, unenlightened by Revelation, affirms the absoluteness of morality, blinks out of sight the total and rigid subserviency it is under to God's spiritual ends in creation; and hence arrays the creature in such absurd relations of independency towards God

as practically to make creation unintelligible, and render all our heartiest beliefs on the subject fallacious and nugatory. Sense, which is individual observation, so long as it is unchecked by science, makes the sun revolve about the earth. And science which is associated observation, so long as it is uncorrected by Revelation, makes God revolve about man, the creator about the creature, the infinite about the finite, turning Him into a mere rewarder of our merit towards Him and a punisher of our demerit. The natural reason suspends our spiritual destiny upon the measure of our moral righteousness; upon the degree in which we are personally differenced from other men before God. It allows us hope towards God in so far as we are entitled to the love and admiration of our fellows, and shuts us up to despair in so far as we have forfeited these qualifications. In very truth however or according to Revelation, our spiritual character becomes lowered just as our moral righteousness, or favorable estimation by our fellow-men, becomes prized by us. Or what is the same thing, our true hope towards God is the measure of our despair in ourselves; the gospel invariably making salvation at God's hands the prerogative, not of high-flying saints by any means, but of low-lying sinners exclusively.

This then is what we find in Swedenborg at the very start, the downright and complete reversal of all our ordinary prejudices in regard to God's spiritual administration. Natural reason conceives of God as an omnipotent conjuror

or magician, who is able at will to summon all existence, personal and real, moral and physical, out of sheer nothing. And it represents creation consequently not as a strictly inevitable procession of the Divine love and wisdom into some grandly unitary and responsive form of consciousness, but as a transient act of God's caprice, whereby He gives being to things which are unconscious, non-existent, nothing. We have all of us an undefined instinctive notion that God is a being not of the most faultlessly human proportions, but of this strictly magical faculty: and scarcely one in a thousand of us doubts, that creation was a mere brute irrational procedure on His part, a stupendous freak of restlessness in fact or miraculous harlequinade, as essentially appreciable to the clod as to the seraph.

Now Swedenborg's books replace this vulgar conception of the subject by a spotless doctrine of Nature, calculated to release the mind from the bondage of superstition and build it up in pure spontaneous adoration of the Highest. He denies that God is the least bit of a conjuror, or possesses any magical power, that is, any power of instantaneous creation, any power of making *something* out of nothing. On the contrary he affirms and demonstrates that all true creatureship consists exclusively in a certain faculty of reaction or reciprocation which the creature possesses towards the creator; which faculty of course would be inconceivable in any but a spiritual form of existence. In other

words the necessary marks of God's creature are freedom and rationality; and as these characteristics qualify man alone, so man alone is God's true creature, all other forms of existence being involved in his form, and owing whatsoever they are and enjoy to its commanding universality. Thus nature derives its total significance from the human form, being in fact a strict and perfect correspondence of all things in man; being nothing more nor less than the spiritual or invisible contents of the human mind made phenomenal to itself, rendered fixed and visible, and hence scientifically appreciable. In short man is the secret harmony or unity of Nature, so that any attempt to comprehend natural things independently of spiritual, or formulate a doctrine of Nature apart from the uses it subserves to the evolution of man's spiritual destiny, is to the last degree childish. The simple rectification of established prejudice which Swedenborg's books operate on this point alone, sheds a flood of light on our mental progress, and makes in fact the difference between day and night on every problem connected with man's origin and destiny.

At all events my own intellect was a prey to habitual and extreme disquiet until I had learned it. I was born in the bosom of orthodoxy, and never knew a misgiving as to the perfect truth of its dogmas, until I had begun to prepare myself for its professional ministry. Then I could no longer evade the enormous difficulties which inhered in its philosophy. I never felt a doubt

as to the grand fundamental truths it upheld, such as the creation, the fall, the redemption and the reconciliation of man. But I felt certain that it maintained these verities in a most absurd and imbecile way, which was sure to disgust the unbribed understanding of men, and expose the benignant truths themselves to neglect if not discredit. But of course I felt myself every way incompetent to stem the evil. I was sure that while orthodoxy had somehow succeeded to a celestial inheritance, it was yet a most unrighteous steward of that inheritance; but how to dispossess it God alone knew. It was at this crisis of my intellectual fortunes that I encountered Swedenborg, whom I had been taught by my mistaken guides in theology to regard as half-fanatic and half-fool, and found in his doctrine of nature a complete extrication from my trouble.

I was forcibly struck in my first cursory glances at these remarkable writings with the statement which everywhere pervades them, that the *natural* realm of creation, and not, as I had always supposed, its spiritual realm, was the true seat of God's creative *power*. In common with all theologians and philosophers, I had always supposed that the creative operation had reference to us primarily as individuals, and only secondarily as a race; or regarded us first morally and afterwards socially: and hence inasmuch as I perceived in myself great moral infirmity, that is, a ready proclivity under temptation to lying theft adultery and murder, my

religious life had always been one of intense anguish. Before making Swedenborg's acquaintance as I have already said, this excessive mental disquiet had led me to a deep though tacit distrust of the orthodox interpretation of the Christian truth. I felt indeed a profound though for the most part helpless conviction that God would be one day discovered on the sinner's side; and that the experiences of remorse and horror I was undergoing were diabolic infestations, rather than any legitimate operation of the Divine spirit within me. But however much my heart revolted, my intellect writhed ineffectually under the iron domination of the letter so dishonestly enforced and riveted by the church; and I would at any moment have given my life for the ability to spiritualize, *i. e.* give a *universal* meaning to, statements so palpably limitary of the Divine supremacy as I found on the face of Revelation.[1] It was not till I had thoroughly explored these extraordinary books, and penetrated to some extent the mines of condensed wisdom they embody, that I could succeed in shaking off my hereditary shackles to orthodoxy, or encounter without pale terror the menace of disaster and opprobrium with which, armed and inspired by the deepest hell, it strives everywhere to harass and keep in bondage the human soul.

1 Swedenborg repeats with what must seem sickening iteration to those who are indifferent to the truth involved, that spiritual thought, in proportion to its purity, tends ever away from *person* to the things signified by person: thus to *universalize* itself.

The potent word of disenchantment for my intelligence, as I have already said, was this, namely: that God is *directly* related to us through our nature or what we have in common one with another; and therefore *inversely* related to us through our moral parts or what we have in conscious distinction one from another. That is to say our natural individuality is a totally fallacious measure of Divine truth, until it has undergone the modification of the public or social consciousness, and become converted thereby into a strictly spontaneous and productive force. I had always viewed the case strictly *é converso*. I had indeed long had an *instinctive* feeling of the truth in the letter of the gospels, where we see Christ invariably flogging the pretension of a moral or personal righteousness in man out of his sight; and preferring any dilapidated harlot in whose heart a temper of unaffected humility has been Divinely quickened, to an unblemished doctor of divinity who yet lacks that precious leaven. But I had never caught a glimpse of its majestic philosophic import. Doubtless the reason was, that regarding Revelation itself as I did with the pinched and lethargic comprehension authorized by the church, I had never seen anything in it but a literal story about the birth life death resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, which being intended to commend him *personally* to our superstitious regard under very dire penalties, by that very fact of course emptied itself of all philosophic or properly human and spiritual significance. I say "of course," be-

cause truth admits no spiritual sanction to our intelligence but the good it reveals to the heart; and if accordingly it disclaim this sanction, and seek to get itself honored by an appeal to our hopes and fears, it at once forfeits its aspect of inspired scripture, and sinks into the dimensions of ordinary literature.

I do not hesitate then to avow my own obligations to Swedenborg for the first clear intellectual insight I got into the gospel; and for the thoroughly philosophic justification which thence befell my long cherished and profound *experimental* conviction of the essentially loathsome character of our moral righteousness. He showed me for the first time the inevitably fallacious nature of the moral instinct, by demonstrating the altogether subordinate and mediatorial part it plays in the evolution of our spiritual destiny. I had never for a moment *intellectually* realized my moral consciousness to be that mere steward or servant of the Divine inheritance in our nature, which Swedenborg showed it to be. On the contrary with the intellect, and in spite of the heart's misgiving, I had always quietly allowed it to be the undeniable lord of the inheritance, and beheld it accordingly whipping the men-servants and the maid-servants at its pleasure, without a suspicion. Far from supposing my natural selfhood or *proprium* to constitute a strictly *negative* token, an essentially *inverse* attestation, of God's spiritual and infinite presence in our nature, I habitually viewed it as the church taught me to view it, that is, as the only

direct and positive manifestation of His power: and my religious life accordingly became one of incessant conflict and perturbation.

How could it have been otherwise? Having as I supposed a purely moral *status* by creation — never dreaming that my selfhood possessed only a formal or subjective validity — I attributed to myself an objective or substantial reality in God's sight, and of course sought to attract His approbation to me, by the unswerving pursuit of moral excellence, by studiously cultivating every method of personal purity. It was all in vain. The more I strove to indue myself in actual righteousness, the wider gaped the jaws of hell within me; the fouler grew its fetid breath. A conviction of inward defilement so sheer took possession of me, that death seemed better than life. I soon found my conscience, once launched in this insane career, acquiring so infernal an edge, that I could no longer indulge myself in the most momentary deviation from an absurd and pedantic literal rectitude — could not for example bestow a sulky glance upon my wife, a cross word upon my child, or a petulant objurgation on my cook — without tumbling into an instant inward frenzy of alarm, lest I should thereby have provoked God's personal malignity to me. There is indeed no way of avoiding spiritual results so belittling, but by ceasing to regard morality as a direct, and looking upon it as an inverse, image of God's true life in us. If my moral consciousness constitute the true and eternal bond of intercourse between

me and God; that is to say, if He attribute to me all the good and evil which I in my insane pride attribute to myself: then it will be impossible for me to avoid to all eternity, either a most conceited and disgusting conviction of His personal complacency in me; or else a shuddering apprehension of His personal ill-will. If I have a naturally complacent temper my religious life will reflect it, and array me spiritually in all manner of nauseous Pharisaism and flunkeyism. If I have what is called a "morbid" natural temperament, on the other hand, leading me to self-distrust and self-depreciation, my religious life will deepen these things into despair, by making my self-condemnation confess itself a feeble reflection of God's profounder vindictiveness.

Here however was a truth which traversed my sensuous superstition from top to bottom, showing me that inasmuch as my moral consciousness itself was but an inverse, never a direct, exponent of spiritual truth or substance, so *á fortiori* every derivation from that consciousness claimed a precisely similar interpretation: thus that my self-righteousness and my self-condemnation attested in every case a strictly *inverse* never a *direct* judgment of the Divine mind towards me; the former being an invariable evidence of His inward or spiritual remoteness from me; the latter of His inward or spiritual nearness. Fed only by sense (symbolically *the serpent*) or, what is the same thing, unenlightened by Revelation, my religious conscience had

always reported me as having life in myself, *i. e.* as being my own substance no less than my own form. And, consequently, whenever the great pent-up fires of natural appetite and passion sought vent in any volcanic devastating floods through the petty mountain-tops of my morality, through the chinks and crevices of my pigmy personality, I, having no discernment of my proper insignificance in the premises, *i. e.* of the utter disproportion between my personal dimensions and the great underlying breadth of human nature itself; incontinently appropriated its stupendous contents to myself, and like a sublimer Jack Horner stupidly marvelled to think, how odious a person I must all the while be becoming to the Divine mind. But here at last came a fragrant breath of heaven, came a fragrant breath indeed from above the heaven of heavens, blowing away this "damned dust" of sense from my soul, and teaching me to see that no possibility existed of *any* one being either personally good or personally evil to the Divine mind; since personality itself was a purely subjective or formal experience of man, and had not the least spiritual title therefore to determine its own objective or substantial contents.

The basis of Natural Religion is this pride of morality; this habitually fallacious estimate we put upon the dignity of our natural individuality. Born in complete ignorance of spiritual things, having no conception of the essential servility our moral experience is under to the needs of a superior spiritual life, we suppose

that it is a point of really Divine order that man should always be invested with the control of his nature, with the responsibility of his natural appetites and passions: the Divine complacency in him being measured by the degree in which he exercises such control. The truth however is that our moral force is called for only during the infancy of human development, or while the social sentiment is still so immature in our bosoms, that no scientific countenance is afforded to the suggestion of God's vital presence in our nature. So long of course as God remains a wholly unrecognized glory in humanity: or while the still undeveloped forms of our rich spontaneous activity hide, instead of plainly revealing, His infinite spiritual indwelling in our very nature itself, and moreover in the lowest things of that nature *preëminently;* we of course exaggerate the worth of the moral or voluntary life; and suppose that the interests of human individuality are indissolubly pledged to its permanence.

No judgment can be more fallacious. Human individuality is *then* at its lowest ebb: in other words our experience of evil is *then* most abundant and overpowering: when the moral force in us is supreme; or has not as yet been chastened refined and glorified by the progress of human society equality or fellowship, into spontaneous or æsthetic form. But *it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps;* and we accordingly during all our philosophic nonage take for granted the primary postulate of consciousness,

which is, that we are our own vital substance as well as derivative form; our own inward reality as well as outward phenomenality. Consciousness reports the selfhood as a finality, as given to us for its own sake or absolutely, and by no means in the interests of a superior Divine end. The symbolic voice of God in Eden said to Adam: "*In the day you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall surely die:*" which, being philosophically interpreted, means that so far as a man is SATISFIED WITH HIMSELF, AS MORALLY CONSTITUTED TO HIS OWN INTELLIGENCE, he nourishes a sentiment of independence towards God, and disunion towards his neighbor; and to that extent immerses himself in pride, which is spiritual death. On the other hand the symbolic voice of the serpent (which means the lowest of our mental forms; the imagination conversant with the mere appearances of things, and ignorant of their spiritual import; the poetic faculty, in short:) pipes an encouraging tune. It says: "*The tree is good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and much to be desired to make one wise: and if you will only eat heartily of it you will become* LIKE GOD, *knowing good and evil.*" That is to say, dropping metaphor and speaking truth, the sensuous imagination in us, which means our faculty of mistaking appearance for reality, affirms the absolute or independent character of the selfhood as a truth of reason; insists so speciously upon its intrinsic validity or essential insubordination to all ulterior spiritual issues, as to persuade us that we have only got

diligently to cultivate and cherish it, in order to come into the image of God's perfection: thus on the one hand degrading God from an infinite or spiritual and therefore purely creative relation towards us, to a finite or moral and therefore purely reactive agency: while on the other hand blinding us to the essential subserviency our moral development is under, to the needs of a signal Divine redemption which is yet to illustrate our nature, and lift it into immortal conjunction with God.

Now religion is no doubt a *quasi* consecration of these sensuous instincts of our intelligence. It is an apparent Divine authentication of this madness of the natural heart, which prompts us to expect God's infinite approbation upon our strictly finite and differential endowments. But this religious consecration of the moral instinct takes place not in the interests of that instinct, but only in those of our eventual living and spiritual emancipation from it. God does indeed formally ratify the moral consciousness in us; but then it is by imposing upon it a ritual and figurative drapery of sacrifice and lustration, which inwardly falsifies its pretension and reveals its utter spiritual hollowness. He apparently sanctions the claim we put forth of a capacity of personal approximation to His perfection; *i. e.* allows our pride of selfhood to inflate itself to the extent of expecting and soliciting His personal countenance and approbation. But this apparent sanction turns out a very real curse, since the sincere worshipper no sooner

attempts to realize the legal or accredited righteousness, and so achieve his coveted personal nearness to God, than he finds himself subjected not merely to a permanent priestly mediation which of itself falsifies his personal aspiration, but also to a perpetual discipline of cleansing and oblation, which leaves him in no doubt that death and not life is the righteous meed of every attempt to compass a literal or actual fulfilment of God's law, and so secure a personal title to His favor.

The letter of the Divine law wears a very easy and seductive aspect to the carnal understanding; and you will accordingly find it true as a general rule, that no more grovelling swine exist, figuratively speaking, than those which are fattened upon the spiritual husks that go to constitute the body of any existing ritual, Christian or Pagan, and are content with that base nutriment. But to spiritual eyes, that is, to an *affectionate* discernment, this carnal letter of righteousness covers over such abysses of spiritual disease disorder and death in the satisfied votary, as to announce itself on its very face a purely prophetic or prospective economy; a mere figure for the time then being, of a very real because spiritual renovation which human nature itself is creatively bound to exhibit at the Divine hands. The mere ecclesiastic, the man who is satisfied with his ritual righteousness because it hides his spiritual raggedness from his own eyes, or keeps him on the best possible terms with himself, attributes of course a posi-

tive sanctity, a direct worth, to religion, as morally uniting God and the worshipper. The spiritual man on the other hand (the man who rejects the ritual righteousness for the same reason which leads the carnal man to embrace it, that is, because it conceals his spiritual nakedness:) attributes to religion a purely figurative sanctity, a purely negative validity, which is that of morally disuniting God and the worshipper; so shutting up the latter's hope to that Divine PROMISE of a spiritual renewing of his nature, which is the sole legitimate antidote to the despair of the honest religious conscience, and which alone is worthy therefore of any reasonable being's regard or confidence.

Religion then, so far from really authenticating the moral instinct in its upward soarings, or vindicating its votary's personal claim to the Divine consideration, is intent upon practically exorcising such claim, by exposing the endless depths of spiritual profligacy which are involved in it. True religion has no force spiritually but to dislodge from our minds the conception of a literal righteousness, of a finite sanctity, among men, such as may distinguish one man from another in the Divine sight; substituting in place of it the recognition of a Divinely wrought and therefore spotless innocence in our very nature itself; based upon a sentiment of the frankest fellowship, of the most intimate unity and equality of every man with every other man. If hereupon any one be disposed to ask why, in this state of things, God accords even a *quasi*

consecration, even a temporary indulgence, to the moral instinct, instead of utterly obliterating it from sight: the answer is, that He does so for the same reason that prompts the architect to excavate a foundation for his house before he puts the house up; namely, to insure its permanence or stability. As the foundation of a house, if it be well laid, permits and subserves any amount of development in the superstructure, so our moral existence, in freely promoting our rational evolution, essentially *subserves* our eventual spiritual manhood. For the moral sentiment in furnishing us as it does with a spiritual or interior development so exactly inversive of God's own spirit, both becomes a veracious basis of consciousness for us to all eternity, and *ipso facto* presents to God that exact form or mould which He requires in order to the communication of His spiritual substance to us, and the consequent building us up in the deathless fellowship of His perfection.

In a word our creation by God in His own image, necessarily involves our redemption from our own nature; involves our elevation out of mere physical and moral into social and æsthetic, consciousness. For if as I have shown we are the offspring of a perfect love, we are bound of course sooner or later to reflect or reproduce such perfection. An infinite or perfect love means a love which is wholly unlimited by self-love, or is so essentially incapable of respecting self as to go forth incessantly in vivifying or giving being to whatsoever is intrinsically contrary to

itself. If then God our creator be of this amazing quality, if His love be so truly infinite as to be love itself, love without one conceivable fibre of self-love, then clearly He cannot be content merely to give us being or render us self-conscious. He must also give us form, or make our self-consciousness reflect and attest His own perfection. As it is said in Genesis ii. 3 He creates us only to make us. Being Himself a spirit of infinite Love, He cannot be content with anything short of an answering spirit in our bosoms, however contrary they be in themselves to it; a spirit of genuine fellowship with our kind which shall swallow up our native selfishness, and make us each in our degree forms of creative benignity. Simply because God Himself is a being so perfect in love — *i. e.* so incapable of loving Himself, and so considerate only of what is not Himself — as to be really creative, we His creatures can come into His likeness only in so far as our natural generation becomes the basis of a spiritual regeneration; or what is the same thing, only in so far as our native impotence and imbecility become exchanged, for a cultivated power and wisdom. And the indispensable condition of this change is, that our natural self-seeking become swallowed up in the interests of our higher social unity; that out of selfish beings we be made social beings; that we disown our native pride and independence for a spirit of exact equality with our brethren; that we unlearn in truth our

moral righteousness, a righteousness which inheres in ourselves as finitely constituted, that is, as spiritually disunited with our fellow-man and God, and cultivate a purely social righteousness, a righteousness in ourselves as in-finitely constituted, that is, as redeemed from our base natural temper of mind, and spiritually united with our fellow-man and God.

CHAPTER VIII.

MANY people suppose that *moral* and *social* are two words for one and the same thing: whereas they express ideas exactly inversive of each other, being reciprocally related as shell and kernel, base and superstructure, letter and spirit. *Morality* expresses the sentiment I have of my own absoluteness, the feeling I have of a self-hood strictly independent of every other man. Society on the other hand expresses the sentiment I have of my strict unity with every other man, a unity so absolute and commanding as to stamp my moral force wholly good or wholly evil simply as it obeys or disobeys its behests. In short the one sentiment finites me in the greatest possible measure; the other in-finites me in equal measure.

Our morality does not make us social beings any more than the foundation of a house makes the house; any more than the shell of a nut makes the nut; any more than the mould of a frieze makes the frieze; in short any more than the mother makes the child. It merely gives us on the contrary that ample individual development and nursing, that affluent preliminary experience of our finite selves, which is necessary to base or engender our subsequent unlim-

ited social expansion. It lifts us out of the mud of animality, out of the mire of mere natural passion and appetite, and endows us with selfhood or soul, that is, with the sense of a life so much more intimate and near than that of the body, as to lead us to identify ourselves with it or to cleave to it alone, cheerfully forsaking all things for it. Thus morality extricates us from the life of mineral vegetable and animal; gives us commanding selfhood or freedom, freedom to be not what our fathers and mothers make us, as is the case with the brute, but whatsoever we ourselves choose to become: so allying us to our own inexperienced imaginations with God; giving us that sentiment of individual power and glory which is unknown to the animal nature, and which is the coarse rude germ of all our subsequent conceptions of spiritual things; whispering in short in our fondest hearts, *Ye shall be as God knowing good and evil.* In a word, morality is the power which every man *as man* possesses, to rise above those natural limitations which bind all lower existence, and appear himself alone, unrelated to any one else.

Self-assertion is thus so clearly the fundamental law, the vital breath, of our moral life, that it is no wonder we cling to that life as the true end of our being, and require an internal Divine quickening, or the denunciatory voice of conscience, before we consent to regard it simply as a means to an infinitely higher end, which is our unity with all mankind. The inspiration of the moral sentiment, the sentiment of selfhood, is

so powerful within us; it is so sweet to feel this delicious bosom inmate disengage itself from its gross carnal envelope, and come forth a radiant white-armed Eve full formed in all Divine vigor and beauty, that we cannot help clasping it to our bosoms as thenceforth bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, cheerfully forsaking for it father and mother; or all we have traditionally loved and traditionally believed; and cleaving undismayed to its fortunes though it lead us through the gloom of death and the fires of hell.

But just this irresistible sweetness of the selfhood, or moral force, in us, is what makes it all the more a snare to us, if it be considered a final and not a mediate gift of God: *i. e.* if it be allowed to control in place of simply serving the social sentiment to which alone it is Divinely tributary. Accordingly every man whose aspirations are elevated above the ground, every man who desires above all things to ally himself spiritually with the Divine spirit, finds his great controversy to lie with *himself;* with this moral temper of his own mind; finds the sole hindrance of his aspirations to lie in this ferocious pride of selfhood, which is indeed an every way indispensable soil for the future spiritual plant, but a soil nevertheless from which the plant is bound sedulously to grow away. Such a man perceives at once that his moral life is not the end of his being, but on the contrary a wholly subordinate means to that end, which is spiritual life or cultivated conformity to God, growing

out of his unaffected acknowledgment of human unity: so that far from cherishing the pride which is instinctive to morality, pride of selfhood, pride of character, pride of differential righteousness, he daily unlearns that foolish conceit, and cultivates instead relations of the tenderest amity and equality with all other men.

It is very easy to see then that the pride of morality is just as sure to stifle God's true life in us which is the social life, unless we keep diligent watch over it, as the cellars of our houses are sure to poison the air of the upper stories, unless we bestir ourselves to keep them dry and clean. Self-love is the vital atmosphere of morality and there can be no extrication from it but by honest conflict with it, conflict if need be even unto death. Some men have been more grievously lacerated in this conflict than others, going down to their graves scourged by the contempt of the proud and unthinking, with banners once so lofty now all trailing in the dust of men's reproach. But this is not because they were spiritually any worse than other men; probably the exact contrary: it is only because they had fifty times the ordinary amount of moral or self-righteous force to start with, and it could only become spiritually weakened and overcome by this terrific personal humiliation. For every man in the exact ratio of his moral force is implicitly and of necessity full of self-confidence, full of pride in himself, and therefore explicitly whenever occasion offers full of contempt

towards others.[1] And he becomes spiritually regenerated, or inwardly conjoined with God, only by honestly subjecting the base instinct to culture: which means, *compelling himself* into relations of the frankest equity with all mankind.

Morality is thus only the subject earth of spiritual existence; just as animality is that of moral existence, and vegetality that of animal existence, and minerality that of vegetable existence. All existence real and personal is thus hierarchically distributed, each successive form being a natural unit or marriage of two discordant forces, and becoming by its own subsequent spiritual variety the basis in its turn of a still higher unity. The lower forms in every case are what give subjective or constitutional *identity* (that is, body) to the higher form. The higher form again in its turn is what gives objective or creative *individuality* (that is, soul) to the lower forms. The mineral gives material existence, or body to the vegetable; but the vegetable gives spiritual being or soul to the mineral, by

[1] I know that these broad statements of the evil pertaining to human nature will affront the distinctively religious development of our day and generation, which is the Unitarian one: but I take a pungent satisfaction nevertheless in making the line of demarcation between the two doctrines sharp and clear, because it should always be remembered that Unitarianism in so far forth as it is a genuine outbirth of our intellectual history, reflects no longer the *unredeemed* natural mind, the mere conscience of disunion which exists between man and God *by nature*, but rather that nascent regenerate consciousness of the race which is being vitalized by the advancing tides of God's holy spirit in humanity, the spirit of human society fellowship or equality. It is this consideration which, leaving Unitarianism totally imbecile as a philosophic doctrine, yet makes it blessedly significant and welcome as an historic fact.

calling forth its uses to a higher unity. The vegetable gives material existence or body to the animal form, which latter again endows the vegetable with spiritual life or soul, in calling forth its uses to a superior style of being. So the animal in like manner gives visible or bodily constitution to man, while man gives invisible or spiritual soul to the animal kingdom by evoking its various uses to his own higher development. And so also man in his turn gives visible form or bodily manifestation to God, while God again gives creative substance, soul, or unity to man in calling forth man's various subserviency to His own infinite and uncreated unity.

All natural existence may be classified into forms of use; all spiritual existence into forms of power. Every real existence, whatsoever we rightly denominate a *thing* as addressing any of our senses, is a form of use to superior existence. Every spiritual existence, whatsoever we rightfully denominate a *person* as addressing our interior perception, is a form of power over inferior existence. Thus the vegetable on its material side is a form of use to the animal kingdom, as giving it sustenance; while on its spiritual side it is a form of power over the mineral kingdom, as compelling it into the service of its own distinctive individuality. The animal again on its visible or corporeal side is a purely subjective implication of the human form, while on its spiritual or invisible side it furnishes the creative unity or objectivity of the vegeta-

ble world. So again man while on his natural side he furnishes a helpless platform or basis to the manifestation of God's perfection, yet as to his spiritual or individual aptitudes he compels not merely the animal but all the lower kingdoms of nature to bear resistless testimony to his power.

But in thus classifying all natural existence into forms of use, and all spiritual existence into forms of power, we must not forget to observe that the use promoted by the one class is never absolutely but only relatively good, nor the power exerted by the other class absolutely but only relatively benignant. That is to say, it is good and benignant not in itself, but in opposition to something else. Thus every natural form is a form of use, but some of these uses are relatively to others good, and some evil. Some minerals nourish vegetation, others starve it. Some vegetables enrich animal life, others poison it. Some animals again are cheerfully serviceable to human life, others fiercely inimical to it. So also when we contemplate human nature we find some of its forms relatively accordant with the Divine perfection, others relatively to these prior ones again most discordant; the former exerting a decidedly benignant influence upon whatever is subject to them, the latter exerting a decidedly malignant influence.

This contrarious aspect both of nature and man has given rise, as the reader well knows, to a great amount of unsatisfactory speculation, because men have scarcely known how,

apart from the light of Revelation, to shape their speculations into accordance with the demands of the Divine unity. The demand of unity in the creator is so peremptory and inflexible, that the mind utterly refuses in the long run to acquiesce in any scheme of creation which leaves creation divided, or puts the creator in permanent hostility with any portion of His work. More than this. The mind not only rejects these puerile cosmologies which leave the creator at war with His own creature, but it goes further and insists, by an inevitable presentiment of the great philosophic verity, that wherever we find a sphere of life antagonistic with itself, the antagonism is purely phenomenal: *i. e.* is not final, does not exist for its own sake but only in the interest of some higher unity. Thus the good and evil attributable to mineral existence are not absolute, do not attach to the mineral itself, but only to its relative subserviency or contrariety to the needs of vegetable existence. So the good and evil attributable to vegetable forms bear reference exclusively to the difference of bearing they exert upon animal existence; while the good and evil again of animal existence attach not to the animal forms themselves, but only to the positive or negative relation they sustain to the human form.

The same rule holds in regard to moral existence, though the nonsensical pride we feel in ourselves habitually blinds us to the fact. I am not a bad man morally, and you a good man,

by virtue of any absolute or essential difference between us, but altogether by virtue of the difference in our relation to that great unitary life of God in our nature, which we call society, fraternity, fellowship, equality, and which from the beginning of human history has been struggling to work itself, by means of this strictly subjective antagonism, into final perfect and objective recognition: you as a morally good man being positively related to that life; I as a morally evil one being negatively related to it. The needs of this great life — which alone manifests God's spiritual presence in our nature — require the utmost conceivable intensity of human freedom; require in other words that man should be spontaneously good, good of himself, good without any antagonism of evil, infinitely good even as God is good. But clearly if we had had no preliminary acquaintance with imperfect or finite good, good as related to evil, we should be destitute of power to appreciate or even apprehend this higher and perfect good. If we had not first suffered, and suffered too most poignantly, from the experience of evil in ourselves as *morally*, *i. e.* finitely, constituted, constituted in reciprocal independency each of every other, we should have been utterly unable even to discern that ineffable Divine and infinite good which is yet to be revealed in us as socially, *i. e.* infinitely constituted, constituted in the closest reciprocal unity of all with each and each with all.

Even as nature's discords then bid us look upwards to man in order to find their point of ad-

justment or unity, so the discords of our moral nature bid us look higher still, namely to the Lord or Divine NATURAL man, in whose transcendent personality all these discords are finally appeased. Nature's contrarieties reflect her intrinsic subordination to the needs of human life. In the same way our moral differences imply no absolute merit or demerit in us, but simply reflect the diversity of our actual relation to that great social destiny in which we are all alike Divinely bound up.

Our social manhood is thus the true travail of the redeemer's soul. This at last is Christ's great life become ours, God's holy name hallowed in our bosoms, His benignant kingdom come in the plenitude of its power, and His gracious will done on earth, the earth of the natural mind, as faultlessly as it has hitherto been done in heaven, the heaven of the spiritual mind. For the social sentiment, the sentiment of human society, human brotherhood, human equality, exhibits the two warring loves of the human bosom, self-love and neighborly love, interest and principle, pleasure and duty, in such perfect unison as that neither can possibly prompt anything contrary to the other, but both alike stand eternally pledged to the promotion of an entirely new spirit in man, a spirit of the widest fellowship, of the freest and tenderest unity with every other man. This social development constitutes an absolutely new nature in man, a Divinely renewed heart and mind, which shall make all Divine ways easy to

follow. "*In those days,*" says the promise,[1] "*I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it on their hearts.*" And where the heart prompts it, obedience of course is sure. The same exalted truth was prefigured by the legal sacrifices in which all things were purged with blood; the blood of the sacrificial victim representing the renewed affections of the worshipper, which would finally redeem him from outward defilement, and unite him with God.

Thus I have no hesitation in avowing my conviction that the total problem of creation infallibly merges in the social problem, inevitably leads us to regard a perfect society or fellowship among men as the one grand aim of God's providence on earth, to which of course our moral and religious history has been strictly incidental and tributary. For society is the guardian of our destiny as a race, the race having as rigid a unity as any of its individual members; and society is the only fitting and intelligible form of this unity. We are wont to say that the being of God consists in His unity, in His being the all of life, and therefore excluding community; the very perfection or infinitude of this unity consisting in the fact, that of the two elements which logically compose it, *individuality* and *universality*, the former or feminine element controls and involves the latter or masculine element. In like manner, though inversely, we may say that the essence of nature is community, *i. e.* a unity which each

[1] Jer. 31.

of her subjects shares equally with every other, and hence excludes all true or spiritual individuality: her very imperfection or finiteness being demonstrable from the fact that of the two elements which go logically to constitute her community, *each* and *all*, or *individuality* and *universality*, the latter or masculine element effectually dominates and swallows up the former or feminine element. Now our moral history is but the actual arrangement and bringing forth to sight of this immense but unsuspected dearth of spirituality in nature; is only the gradual draining off and exhaustion of our latent natural worthlessness and imbecility, in order to our eventual thorough impletion with all Divine goodness wisdom and power. The sole mission of conscience (which is a limitation of the moral sentiment, the sentiment of what is due to oneself, by the social sentiment, the sentiment of what is due to one's neighbor,) has been to give us true self-knowledge, and so qualify us for the true knowledge of God. This it does by vivifying within our individual bosoms this communistic *animus* of the race, or bringing into sharp actuality the perfect disrespect which every merely natural man feels for his brother. Its efficacy is however distinctly purgative not nutritive. Its invariable burden is to prove to its subject that he, by virtue simply of his natural genesis, and apart from God's redeeming presence and operation in his nature, seeks as far as in him lies to subjugate all mankind to himself, and to appropriate to his own

ostentatious uses all the wealth of nature. Conscience is thus an indisputable ministry of death, universal death to every child of Adam that obeys it: but of course this death in ourselves as finitely constituted, as carnally pronounced, as morally characterized, is purely incidental and transitory, being in fact but the needful background or anchorage which our inexperience requires in order to our grasp of that endless and perfect life in ourselves which we realize as socially constituted, as spiritually pronounced, as æsthetically characterized, in the second Adam. For when our moral experience has run itself dry, that is to say, when it has revealed to us the abysses of spiritual disease disorder and death we are in by nature, it becomes so enfeebled as no longer to offer any opposition to the access of the social sentiment in our bosoms, by which we finally become elevated out of this chaotic natural communism into orderly human proportions, and so made a tabernacle worthy of the creator's amplest indwelling.

Our experience avouches the utter incompatibility of the moral sentiment (regarded as a life-giving power) with the social sentiment; it being manifestly impossible that any one should feel the spiritual brotherhood or equality of another, to whom at the same time he feels himself morally or personally superior. The progress of human society accordingly, the ever-deepening sentiment of human fellowship, is fast obliterating our moral manhood,[1] that petty

[1] See Appendix, Note A.

manhood which stands in the conception of a purely personal merit and demerit among men. It is this infirm conception which has organized all the institutions of the old world, and is now fast leaving them to their righteous doom without the meed of a disinterested sigh or tear. In the new world which is opening its pearly gates for the redeemed of the Lord to enter, that great city, the holy Jerusalem, which is even now descending from God out of heaven having all the glory of God, "*neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision*, BUT A NEW CREATURE:" *i. e.* a mind of such frank and fearless fellowship with whatsoever bears the name of man, as makes all virtue to lie in the practical recognition of human equality and all vice in its denial. There and then of course every man will prove by the simple force of his manhood alone, an every way worthy subject of the Divine infinitude.

The endowment of man with this renovated or Divine-natural form, is much more than equivalent to all the advantage which has hitherto accrued from his isolated individual regeneration, because it exhibits a fulfilment where the latter exhibited only a pledge or promise. The importance of regeneration as a principle of the Divine administration; its public interest as distinguished from its private incidental interest to its personal subject; lay exclusively in the furtherance it always ministered to the precise result here contemplated, namely, the inauguration of a perfect human society or fellowship. It

was an implicit recognition of human fellowship when as yet there was no explicit recognition of it possible; a negative religious expression of the truth when as yet there could be no positive scientific expression of it, when as yet in short the great truth of human brotherhood was wholly submerged under the natural communism of the race, or at best held in mute abeyance to mere ecclesiastical and political usage. So long as the Divine truth lay latent and unsuspected under these tenacious carnal coverings; so long as the spotless inward innocence and boundless outward power to which universal man is destined by virtue of his derivation from infinite Love and Wisdom, lay wrapped up concealed and almost stifled under these rude symbolic husks of priest and king, or else came forth only to be universally discredited reviled and crucified: so long of course the individual spiritual regeneration of man was the most sacred of truths, because it furnished the sole armory to the Divine spirit whereby to combat evil in the human bosom, or precipitate self-love from its usurped supremacy over neighborly love. The regenerate spirit is one of the strictest fellowship or equality: that is to say, it prompts its subject invariably to forbear doing to others what he *would not* have others do to himself, and invariably to do to others what he *would* have others do to him. This is a truly regenerate temper in man, because naturally every man loves himself more than others, and so far as he can prudently do so uses the possessions and even the

person of another as his own. The essentially communistic quality of nature renders this *animus* inevitable. Accordingly unless the Divine Providence had all along the course of history singled out such persons as were capable of spiritual regeneration without detriment to their conscious freedom, evil would have reigned uncontrolled throughout history, and creation consequently have been stifled in a vain effort to get birth or put on form. In short self-love which is the vital principle of communism (hell), would have forever dominated neighborly-love which is the vital principle of individuality (heaven); and thus not merely man's moral life which is the strict neutrality or indifference of heaven and hell would have been impossible, but *à fortiori* his social life to which the moral life serves but as a transition, and which itself involves the intimate and eternal fusion of heaven and hell in a new and Divine-natural personality of man, would have been forever defeated.

We have only to glance in fact at the literal page of history in order to verify these philosophic data. The whole recorded consciousness of the race, as exhibited in its various stages of ecclesiastical and political evolution, proves that the exact meaning of the Providential administration of human affairs has been to give man social and æsthetic form or consciousness, by means of a sickening experience of the endless disease disorder and death wrapped up in his physical and moral consciousness: *i. e.* pertaining to him as a being disunited with God and

his fellows by the intervention of Church and State, or priesthoods and governments; and who is to be united consequently only by the disappearance of those institutions. In other words the whole record of God's dealing with the race, shows Him to have aimed first at gradually disenchanting man of all pretensions to a religious righteousness, and then at gradually disabusing him of all confidence in his political stability: so ripening him for the hearty recognition of those exclusively Divine laws of order which inhere in his social constitution, and are illustrated in every form of spontaneous or productive action.

The moral experience of the race necessarily involves this double or divided historic movement which we name Church and State; the former a descending or centrifugal movement by means of which the creature becomes self-convinced of his essential antagonism, as naturally constituted, to the Divine perfection: the latter an ascending or centripetal movement, by means of which the creature acknowledges himself as such recognized antagonist of the Divine perfection, to be rightfully under law to his fellow-man. In other words our moral consciousness as negatively reflecting our social destiny, is made up of two opposing elements, *self* and *the brother*. But inasmuch as the virus of their oppugnancy inheres only in the former or active element, *i. e.* in the selfishness of the human heart, so the Church as representing this element is bound to serve the State, or assume a second-

ary place with respect to it. The sole office of the church is to inspire its votary with a conviction of sin, or to lead him inwardly to humble himself before God. In this way she prepares him for good citizenship, or disposes him to such a tender recognition of his neighbor's equality with himself in all inward regards, as shall practically beget the strictest outward fellowship. The play of these two forces fills the page of human history, until they succeed at last in generating a third or grandly unitary force which we call society, in which they both willingly coalesce and disappear, and which consequently thenceforth assumes the undivided responsibility of human destiny.

Let us understand then that the destiny of man in Nature is to be made social out of moral; to attain to a conscience of perfect social unity and order, through a previous conscience of complete moral discord and disorder. In a word our universally admitted spiritual or individual regeneration, has always been but a Providential stepping-stone and type of our universally ignored natural or common recreation; and what above all things is now incumbent on us, is, to reanimate this drooping but Divine truth of human regeneration, by lifting it out of its almost wholly lapsed and lifeless — because merely ritual — private acceptation, and giving it a grander public application, an application to the race rather than the individual.

Undoubtedly the race attains to its majority

or new-birth, more slowly than the individual; but not the less surely. The time will certainly come (and I should say from existing signs, very soon come) when the public conscience will confess and put away evil with as much alacrity as has hitherto been illustrated by the private conscience. Then society will see what only an individual mind here and there has hitherto seen, that our sense of infirmity or sin is never a token of the Divine displeasure to us, but only of His tenderest inward delight in us: thus that we have walked the weary road we have walked, and suffered the bitter things we have suffered, not because God hated or condemned us, or had even the faintest shadow of a quarrel with us, but solely because He loved us with unspeakable love, and wooed us in that unsuspected way out of the death we have in ourselves to the embrace of His own incorruptible life.

CHAPTER IX.

IT is of course inevitable that what I have been saying should prove very unpalatable to our existing pride of Moralism, fortified as it everywhere feels itself to be not only by the power and prestige of Natural Religion, but even by the literal or *quasi* countenance of Revelation.[1] The highest conception of life possible to the religious dogmatist is the moral conception, because our natural or unquickened reason, the reason still dominated by sense, has no discernment but of finite existence, and morality constitutes the highest style of such existence. Voluntary good, the good which supposes a previous conflict with evil and rejection of it,

[1] I freely admit that if we had nothing to guide us as to the spiritual contents of Revelation but the Jewish letter, apart from the living explication of that letter furnished by the Christ, we should still be a long way off from any just recognition of the Divine infinitude. The letter of a Divine revelation assuming as it necessarily must the exact form of the intelligence to which it is addressed (in order not to overpower it), can at best only reproduce and authenticate the fallacious judgments of that intelligence. And unless therefore it receive in the progress of history some commanding spiritual interpretation, it must confess itself permanently inadequate to its office, and harden its adherents in hopeless error. It is this insane idolatry of the mere body of the Christian truth fatally blinding us to its true spirit, which everywhere belittles the average ecclesiastical intellect, and explains the persistent grossness and carnality of our ordinary religious life.

and therefore implies merit in the votary, is the highest quality of good recognizable by our sensuous intelligence; as voluntary evil, which supposes an intelligent rejection of good, and therefore implies demerit in the votary, is the lowest quality of evil cognizable to that intelligence. The possibility of morality is wholly contingent upon the exact balance of these opposites. In proportion as either extreme preponderates in the natural constitution of the subject, the freedom of his action will of course be impaired, and his morality to that extent vitiated. He may make thenceforth a very good dove or a very good serpent, but no longer a *man* containing in himself the stupendous contrarieties of heaven and hell, or the exactly equal possibilities of the brightest spiritual day, and the murkiest most menacing spiritual night.

Such being the highest conception of life possible to the natural understanding, it is obvious that the infinitude which science ascribes to Deity is a moral infinitude, that is to say, the power of being at His own pleasure infinitely good or infinitely evil towards other beings than himself. Morality or autonomic power being the characteristic of human nature with respect to the brute nature, being the thing which separates man from all lower existences, must of course be thought to ally him with all higher existences. The Divine existence consequently if recognized at all must be recognized in human shape, so that practically the infinite creator is always humbled to the lineaments of the in-

firm finite creature. In place of man made in God's image, as the truth will eventually be, we first see God everywhere made in the image of man. Hence all the early mythologies portray Deity as an unmixed abomination to the spiritual sense, having any amount of purely moral power, that is, of ability and inclination to associate Himself with some persons and to avert Himself from others, and delighting to exercise it in all manner of benefit to those that please Him, and all manner of detriment to those who displease Him. The infinite name of God is thus filled out with finite substance, until it reflects at last all the littleness and depravity of the lowest natural mind.

The letter of the Jewish ritual supplies the culminating type in this order of ideas. Here we have the great and beneficent creator of all men narrowed down to the paternity of one family, and that one of the meanest known to human kind; associated with the destiny of one man, himself a homeless vagabond upon the face of the earth: and promising all other men prosperity or menacing them with calamity as they should stand voluntarily related to these. You would think in restricting your eye to the letter of the Jewish scriptures, or estimating them apart from the luminous spiritual explication and commentary they met in the life death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that God was most strictly a moral existence, a being like ourselves of pure will, capable on occasion of the most revolting favoritism, and then of an oppression

so tyrannical and remorseless as to put our pigmy iniquities quite out of countenance.

But the Jewish scriptures fortunately are utterly unintelligible apart from the lustrous interpretation they receive at the hands of Christianity, which leaves it clear as the sun in heaven that the Divine love has never contemplated anything short of an unmixed blessing to the entire race of man, has never designed anything short of a renovation of our very nature itself. Christ and his apostles deny that the Divine promise is ever of any private application, of any personal significance. They affirm that all the promises and prophecies of the Bible have exclusive reference not to any progeny of Abraham, nor even of Adam, but to an entirely new seed, a new spiritual creation of man, which should obliterate every vestige of the old carnality, and fill the natural mind with the glory of God as the waters fill the sea. No doubt this strain of doctrine was so hostile to the obvious face of the old Testament letter, that the carnal Jew in the exact measure of his devotion to that letter, was bound to reckon Christ a blasphemer. The eternal justification of Jesus however lies in this, that the letter of a Divine revelation is of necessity and always an inverse and not a direct measure of its spiritual contents. Revelation always implies a descent of Divine truth, a coming down on its part to a lower plane of intelligence than is primarily its due, in short a humiliation or obscuration of its legitimate splendor, in order not to harm the dim and feeble intelligence

which still aspires to know it. Every revelation of God to man capable of winning his assent, must take place within the intelligible limits of his own nature. The validity of the revelation is rigidly contingent upon its familiar adaptation to the intelligence it would enlighten: and what possibility was there in the infancy of human development, that any son not merely of Abram, but of Adam, should have caught a spiritual glimpse of God, or have failed to regard Him as the mere unlimited expansion of every distinctively human virtue, and of every distinctively human infirmity? Besides it is upon this very capacity of the Divine mercy to abase itself to the level of the coarsest carnal concupiscence in the creature, that the latter's subsequent spiritual resuscitation in the Divine image, his endless interior sympathy and conjunction with all Divine perfection, exclusively pivots. For it is only by perfectly appeasing our natural desires, by richly and even exuberantly satisfying every legitimate appetite and passion of our nature, that the Divine love succeeds at last in spiritually extricating us from its bondage, and so conjoining us in eternal fellowship with Himself. Thus the integrity of the Jewish scriptures as an authentic revelation of the Divine name, hinges to my apprehension upon their so faithfully associating that name with the destiny of a person so obscure and worthless in all conventional estimation as Abram; with the interests of a people so every way selfish and contemptible as that which descended from his loins. The salient

peculiarity of the Jewish revelation is, that it gathers in the Divine love from its wonted association with the gorgeous and flaunting dynasties of the earth, with the recognized and established powers of the world, and identifies it with an unknown powerless and unenlightened individual man, in an insignificant corner of space, without family descent, without followers, without wealth, without anything that attracts the servile adherence of men, pledging itself to turn all his solitude into populous plenty, and make his barrenness blossom as the rose. Beginning thus in a man of little form or comeliness, the Revelation ends in one of less: in a man of so little conventional respectability indeed as led vulgar observers high and low to esteem him most righteously smitten of God and afflicted; of so few visible resources as to have been born in a stable, and to have been destitute all his days both of a place to lay his head, and of bread to sustain his life; with so slender a regard moreover for the established proprieties of his time and country, as cheerfully to permit the grateful and familiar intercourse of the outcast and degraded, while he never came in contact with the most conspicuous piety of his nation, but to rebuke its unconscious hypocrisy, and lay bare its hidden cruelty, declaring that it was then especially the arch instrument of Satan, when it most believed itself doing the will of heaven.

In no other way as I conceive could the unsuspected infinitude of the Divine Love so ade-

quately reveal itself as in thus passing by all that the stupid natural heart instinctively worships under the established forms of learning decorum eloquence piety talent wealth empire or other fetish, to connect itself with the lowest and most despised things in man, that so its true character might be seen: not as a mere moral force approving and widening the existing differences among its creatures, but as a distinctively spiritual force flashing forth the inmost and essential unity of those creatures so vividly as not merely to flood every contrasted mountain-top and valley of moral inequality among men with the light of an inextinguishable Divine contempt and oblivion, but also to convert morality itself, the total moral power of man, into the puniest type and shadow — into the most carnal matrix or earthly mould — of the perfected Divine righteousness which is ultimately to illustrate his nature. Every word of Christ's mouth, every act of his life, were meant to show that the pride of morality in man is wholly illusory: that any distinction among men of good and evil as determined by the letter of the Divine law, is and must always be destitute of spiritual sanction, inasmuch as all men being alike dependent upon God for all they are, have no just title spiritually to exalt themselves one above another: in short that God definitively declines treating with conventionally righteous people, or the respectabilities of the earth, on any other terms than their unconditional spiritual humiliation: which means their freely con-

fessing themselves sinners in virtue of that very righteousness or respectability, and their consequent renunciation of all boasting over their less fortunate fellow-men.

It is not by any means however the apparent dishonor I do to morality, in thus subordinating it to the exigencies of our social destiny, which chiefly outrages the prejudices of the unthinking; it is the far deeper dishonor I seem to do religion in subjecting it to the same commanding necessity. For the religious man is popularly conceived to be the end of creation; is thought to be immediately or in his own proper person acceptable to God; and a manifest wrong accordingly is done to his conventional primacy, when he is made a mere transition to some superior style of manhood. None of our natural prejudices is more intolerant, none yields more slowly to the modification of history, than this, namely: that God is at bottom a being of infinite self-love, of infinite susceptibility to affront and outrage, and therefore infinite in his exactions of personal devotion from His creatures: so that religion, being the expression of such personal devotion, is everywhere taken to be the highest form of good He recognizes in His creature; an absolute good indeed, subservient to nothing else, and claiming of right the unlimited subservience of everything else to itself. I must at once dispose myself to wrestle with this burly prejudice till I overthrow it, or else expose the great truth I advocate to obloquy. If I shall have to traverse considerable ground in

doing this, I hope my reader will see the necessity more than justified in the sequel.

Before entering however on a new chapter, let me anticipate an objection of my reader, who may allege that I have given an unfair statement of the religious postulate, inasmuch as the religious votary does not avowedly worship God as a being of infinite self-love, but on the contrary, in words at all events, ascribes all manner of humane perfection to Him. This is true. The absolute dependent of a despotic will is more apt to conceal than express the real emotions of his heart towards that will. But I am talking of the practical attitude of the religious mind towards God; and I appeal to the entire religious record of the race, to every established ritual since time began, to show that while "the worshipper has drawn nigh to God with his lips, his heart has been far from him." They all alike prove that God has always been practically regarded by his authorised worshipper as a being of the pettiest personal aims, and of an intercourse with His creatures so purely commercial, that anything like spontaneous love and reverence towards Him is utterly out of the question.

But I come nearer home, and make my appeal to the reader's own consciousness, if it be an orthodox one, with a triumphant certainty of being justified by it. For our orthodox ecclesiasticism proceeds upon the notion of God being a spirit full to repletion of self-love: so full in fact of exorbitant regard to Himself in

all His intercourse with His creatures, that He is incapable of forgiving their infirmities freely and frankly as they themselves are capable of forgiving one another; and demands instead, like a bloodier Shylock, that every base forfeiture of his bond be literally paid down. What does orthodoxy say for example of the Christian atonement? What light does it make that great transaction to shed upon the Divine character?

Why, it makes the Christian atonement to turn altogether upon a something suffered by Christ to placate the Divine nature, rather than a something done by him to purify the human nature: so placing the obstacle to man's salvation, not in man's own purely constitutional infirmity where alone it belongs, but in the immitigable savagery of his creative source, in the essential inhumanity of God. Substitution is of course the enforced mechanism of the orthodox scheme, because otherwise the Divine love would be denied even a mercenary manifestation, even a moonlight radiance. For the scheme postulates God as a being of such essential malignity (euphemistically called holiness) as to require that His thirst of blood once aroused by the sin of His own abject and helpless creatures, should be slaked only in one of two ways: either 1. by the substantive reduction of these creatures themselves to eternal misery; or else 2. by the substitution in their place of an exquisitely innocent victim, whose pangs compensating by their intensity what they lacked in volume, might lend

such keenness of satisfaction to the Divine appetite for vengeance, as would practically amount to an eternal glut.

Judged of by either alternative this scheme is obviously fatal to the Divine character; reduces the Divine name indeed below the level of the lowest diabolism. For the devil's evil is the evil of a finite nature merely: *i. e.* springs out of his inability to compass his own ends of life, which are the loves of self and of the world, without damage to the interests of other people. Accordingly if you could only release the devil from this limitation, and give his aims practical infinitude, by making the interests of other men freely harmonic with his own, or what is the same thing, by ordaining a scientific society among men, you would perfectly and permanently deliver him from evil, and make him at last overtly what he has always been covertly the pledge and purchase of a true Divine order on earth. But the evil here orthodoxly alleged of God inheres in Himself as infinitely constituted, and is therefore wholly irrespective of His relations to others. It is a vindictiveness or ferocity which is alleged to inhere in His proper infinitude, or to grow out of His relations to Himself, and is consequently independent of everything subsequently to arise in His intercourse with His creatures. Clearly then I have no need to go a step outside the objector's own consciousness, in order to prove ritual religion a very real though most unconscious dishonor to the Divine name; a most

thorough though most undesigned obscuration of the Divine perfection. And this is literally what its whole history amounts to, namely: a spiritual denial, under the guise of a formal acknowledgment, of the creative infinitude, operated by the still unsubdued lusts of pride and covetousness in the human bosom.

CHAPTER X.

NOTHING I am persuaded can be more fatally misleading to a cultivated regard, than to accept the testimony of the mere religious conscience as of any direct worth, or as final, in respect to Divine things. Death not life is the inevitable guerdon of that mistake, if it be permanently confirmed by the intellect; *i. e.* a spiritual stupor to which physical death bears only a feeble analogy; a dim typical significance. The religious consciousness of man — what we call Natural Religion, meaning thereby a conscience unenlightened by Revelation — is never a blessing but always a curse, if the votary be satisfied with it, if it give him intellectual repose instead of uneasiness. It is a blessing only in so far as it disturbs him or leaves him unsatisfied, by confessing like the Jewish law its own insufficiency to appease the need of the worshipper, and pointing for its fulfilment to something beyond itself. A bare glance at the benighted state of the heathen nations, among whom natural religion has undergone no modification from Revelation, suffices to show the utterly palsying influence which the religious instinct when left to itself exerts upon intellectual progress. In fact a large survey of the operation of the religious

instinct in history (the instinct which prompts a man to aspire after direct personal relations to God, relations determined by his moral qualifications) would lead us to infer that its sole function had been to illustrate the profound and otherwise unimaginable baseness of the human heart, or bring forth its latent pride and selfishness in forms so profuse, so wanton, so diabolic, as to make us at last gladly renounce the possibility of a moral righteousness, and cling instead solely to those laws of positive order which are Divinely revealed in the great truth of human society or fellowship.

But we need not traverse the history of the race to justify this momentous conclusion. The appeal is direct to our own individual bosoms, to our own private experience. Every man emancipated from ecclesiastical superstition, or in the habit of dealing fairly with his own intellect, spontaneously unlearns and becomes ashamed of his distinctively religious activity — that which is motived upon the essential contingency of the Divine mercy, or implies a state of suspended animation in it towards the worshipper until he jog it into action by prayer or other pious sacrifice — because he perceives it to be inwardly reeking with unbelief and insult to the Divine name. No man whatever could for an instant tolerate in himself any such meritorious attitude as this towards God, unless the moral force in him, the sentiment of a selfhood underived from God, had so corrupted his spiritual innocence and blinded him to the truth of

things, as to give him a *quasi* independence of God, and make the tree of knowledge of good and evil therefore seem to bear the only fruit suitable to nourish and make him wise. If not only my seeming but my real relation to God be a moral or personal one, so that I am justly capable of occupying to His regard as well as my own an attitude of merit and demerit, it can only be because the moral force in me, or sentiment of selfhood, is absolute or underived; since manifestly if my selfhood were derived from God, it could not with propriety appropriate good and evil to itself, or hold itself amenable to His praise and blame. But any such insane pretension as this is effectually refuted by the whole tenor of history, by the whole march of the Divine Providence on earth, which shows the merely physical and moral consciousness of man to be rapidly and inevitably merging in his social and æsthetic consciousness.

The error is still more luminously, although more compendiously, refuted to the religious mind on the face of Revelation itself, every feature of which goes to avouch the pride of morality or selfhood in man as the sole enemy of God's righteousness on earth. The aim of all true religion, of all Divine revelation, from the beginning of time, has been to abase the pride of the human heart, by prostrating all those futile distinctions which men laboriously erect and cherish among themselves, and reducing them to the same dead level of unmixed dependence on the sheer Divine mercy. Every

great primitive creed of the earth is imbued with this spirit, however feebly they who name themselves after these creeds reflect it. The swarming sects which have sprouted from these great primitive roots, have lost all savor of their spiritual beginnings, and are no more to be confounded with the parent substance in any case, than so many mites are to be confounded with the wholesome original cheese out of whose dissolute carcass they spring. Sectarian testimony is very nearly worthless in so serious an inquest as this, because sectarianism is always a mere reaction against some established intellectual tyranny, and has at best some transient ecclesiastical or political emancipation in view. No intelligent student of history would accept as *à priori* probable a Jew's estimate of the spirit of Moses, a churchman's estimate of the spirit of Christ, a Buddhist's estimate of the spirit of Buddha, simply because the original spirit of these majestic dispensations has been completely obscured in the bosom of their disciples under a frivolous Pharisaic zeal for the interests of the letter: so that whatsoever was grandly human and generous in the primitive dogma becomes in the commentary personal and mean. History however teaches us that the aim of all authentic Revelation has been to destroy human pride and covetousness by denying human virtue, that purely finite virtue which springs out of the conflict of good and evil in human nature, and is the source of all our spiritual arrogance rapacity and uncleanness.

At all events, and this is what we are chiefly concerned with, Christianity clearly inherited this beneficent mission from Judaism, and at once proceeded to reassert it with so sincere an emphasis, as easily to insure the new faith the shaping of all subsequent human history. The Mosaic revelation was based upon certain traditions which had been handed down from the earliest ages, in which the great laws of man's interior or spiritual evolution are shadowed forth under the forms of a literal creation, fall, and redemption, with a mingled fulness and conciseness unparalleled in symbolic literature. But it proceeded to erect upon this traditional basis a doctrine of incomparable philosophic significance, in which the universal relation of man to God is prefigured with an exactness level to a child's understanding. The scope of the Mosaic institutions was that Jehovah, or the self-existent, who revealed Himself under that title to the fathers of the Jewish people, avouched Himself the true God only by giving His people deliverance from oppression; only by redeeming them from bondage. In other words the direct force of the Mosaic teaching was, that redemption is the measure of creation: in which case, if the Jewish God create the race, it necessarily follows, dropping out the shadow and taking up the substance, that God spiritually creates us all only in so far as He first gives us redemption from the evils incident to our natural destitution. Here for the first time in history the great truth of the Incarnation peeps forth, and peeps forth

moreover in the very largest guise, under great national characters capable of being read after a myriad of years' interval. It only needed accordingly the illumination of Christ's humane temper, to give this Jewish letter the broadest spiritual ratification, by showing that the deliverance God accomplishes for us is out of no Gentile bondage but out of every evil most strictly incident to human nature itself, the nature of Jew as well as Roman. In short all Christ's teaching implies that the only redemption to which God is privy in our behalf, is a spiritual redemption, a redemption from our very nature itself, which conscience when fairly enlightened by the Divine law declares to be full of evil: so that a conscience of sin in the votary became thenceforth the unmistakable badge and evidence of God's spiritual presence and operation in his bosom.

This conscience of sin, in fact, which is the immemorial flower of all honest religious experience, the rich ripe fruit of all devout discipline and culture, will well repay a little study at our hands. How does the reader account for the fact that the deepest and truest religious life of the race should bear no other blossom than this conscience of sin? Can it be accounted for on the popular hypothesis that religion furnishes a direct tie between God and his worshipper? Is it not far better accounted for on the hypothesis that it furnishes only a negative or inverse tie between them; that it acts at best as a hyphen uniting them indeed but only by previously dis-

joining them? If my ritual devotion be a thing in itself acceptable to God, I cannot see why it should incessantly bear such bitter fruit. If the end of my religious culture has been only to convince me ever more and more deeply of sin towards God: if the most zealous watchfulness exerted not only over my words and deeds but over my secret thoughts and affections: if prayer pertinaciously pursued in the privacy of my own closet year in and year out, the prayer of a despairing soul in hell famished for one drop of the water of Divine forgiveness, for one fragrant breath of God's peace and righteousness: if the profusest almsgiving and the most servile conformity to the narrowest obligations of religious convention: if all these things I say only suffice to deepen and render more desperate this damnable conviction of my individual rottenness, of my personal alienation or remoteness from God: then clearly it seems to me that one of two conclusions is irresistible; either 1. that I have been all this while on a wholly absurd and perverse tack in my approaches to God; or else 2. that God is a being of such essential obduracy or inhumanity, as practically to ignore the usual motives of our purest and least selfish action, and take delight in the frenzied sighs and tears of His own offspring.

But here again some one will object saying "No! no! you mistake the case. The conscience of sin as postulated by religion in every true subject, is not final, is not demanded for its

own sake, but in order strictly to give the subject hope towards God, that is, as a preliminary condition of the Divine favor."

I understand the objection fully. Let me make sure that the objector himself understand it equally well.

Does the objector mean to say then, when he alleges my conviction of sin as a preliminary condition of the Divine favor, that the Divine favor towards me is moved or motived by that conviction upon my part? Does he mean to say that the Divine complacency in me is actually prompted by my becoming convinced of sin towards Him? Yes? Then let me ask another question. Is the conviction of sin which I feel a real conviction; or is it a mere dramatic one conceived in the interests of God's subsequent mercy? Is it a great and terrible reality, accurately reflecting the truth of things as far as it goes? Or is it a mere exaction of the religious drama, a simulated or artificial state of feeling enforced upon the *dramatis personæ* with a view solely to increase the *éclat* of the catastrophe?

If the objector affirm the former alternative, he at once denies what he calls the Divine holiness, meaning thereby God's abhorrence of sin. I could easily conceive — supposing God to have the personal abhorrence of sin which the objector attributes to Him — how He might show mercy to one who was really an evil-doer, but yet had no self-condemnation therefor: because He would forfeit no prestige in such a

man's eyes by heaping him up with kindness. But so long as I not only am a sinner, but have the deepest conviction of the fact, feeling myself put thereby to an endless distance from God, God's holiness it appears to me becomes above all things bound to respect my convictions, and do nothing to impair or deface them, under penalty of forever forfeiting my regard. Whatever He might do towards one who was actually ignorant of the relation between them, my intense knowledge of that relation forbids His drawing nigh to me in mercy, without shocking my belief in Him beyond all recovery. Does not the objector see how childish a contradiction he is guilty of, when he thus insists upon God's personal hatred of sin, and yet paints Him blessing the sinner most amply at the very moment when the latter's conviction of unworthiness to be blessed is most intense and truthful? Absurdity can go no further, attains in fact its sabbath, in thus making God deliberately violate those laws of rationality which constitute His fundamental abode in us.

If on the other hand the objector affirm the latter alternative, and say that our conviction of sin bears no relation to the actual truth of things, but is demanded simply by the exigencies of the Divine mercy which otherwise could get no purchase upon our regard; that it grows out of a mere transient hiding of His face on God's part from the soul He is going to bless, with no touch of reality about it, being in fact a mere arbitrary and enforced reduction of the soul to

despair, with a view to enhance the lustre of God's approaching mercy: then clearly the objector sinks religion to the level of a vulgar nursery farce, and degrades the adorable Name to a traffic in deceptions so paltry, to a habit of egotism so refined and remorseless, that any half-breed savage might be expected to shy at them.

And yet this is the precise practical attitude of the church upon all this question. She does in words affirm the Christian redemption of human nature, but she makes this redemption perfectly inoperative towards the sinner, save in so far as he becomes qualified for it by some underhand dealing of the Divine spirit with him, issuing in this conviction of sin. It is not the sinner *quâ* a sinner who ever experiences the Divine clemency; but only the sinner who is favorably differenced from other sinners by some sly dishonest operation of the Divine spirit in his bosom disposing him to appreciate and solicit it. The whole truth of Christ's redemption is thus turned into a stupendous sham, and God's stainless mercy which has no respect but to the need of His creatures, and above all their unfelt need, is converted into a paltry self-seeking, into a contemptible solicitude for His own aggrandizement. We occasionally indict our mock-auctions as nuisances, because they swindle the public into the purchase of stuffed watches. But our bogus theologians who systematically convert the fine gold of the gospel into glittering tinsel, and sell it for lucre, occupy the high-

est seats in our synagogues, receive the profoundest greetings in our market places, and are devoutly called of men Rabbi! Rabbi!

I deny this pinchbeck evangel *in toto*. It is an outrage and an insult to all goodness and truth. So far as it becomes a working-principle in us, a principle of life or action, it turns us intellectually into idiots, and paralyzes every generous throb of our bosoms. And surely that cannot be a Divine truth whose legitimate tendency is to soften the brain and harden the heart. Creation is not a Divine make-believe, nor is God the supreme charlatan that so many devout respectable men conceive Him to be. Our conviction of sin is not a pure comedy enacted by the invisible spirit of God in our bosoms, and intended to set off His subsequent great mercy; nor is redemption in general that exquisitely shallow and unveracious performance which our best-accredited theologians delight to make it appear. On the contrary it is at once the profoundest and the sublimest of truths; the profoundest, because it calls into vigorous play every emotion, every affection, every passion of the heart, clothing it indeed with new and expansive powers to all eternity; and the sublimest, because it is the most fertile also in intellectual consequences, putting the mind indeed upon a career of endless development. I hope I shall be able in the sequel to justify my convictions in this regard to my reader's intelligence. In the mean time let us pursue the topic we are on a little further, in order to

ascertain if we can the philosophic contents of what we call "a conscience of sin."

One of the first things that strikes the mind in investigating the origin of the mental judgment which we denominate "a conscience of sin," is that though the judgment be moral in its beginnings (or take its rise in a lively perception of some wrong actually done) it soon loses that quality and becomes altogether spiritual. In other words, it is matter of daily observation that a genuine conscience of sin, or sense of self-condemnation, is out of all ratio to the amount of evil actually done, much more actually doing. In other words still, we all know very well that they who habitually do the least evil have the tenderest consciences, they who do the most the bluntest consciences.

Now this fact is inexplicable upon any other hypothesis than that the sense of sin is at bottom only a tough earthly rudiment and root of spiritual reverence or humility; an instinctive cordial pre-sentiment, rather than a developed intellectual sentiment, of the awful disproportion which exists between the all-good and His dependent offspring. It is a crude unhandsome germ, a coarse earthly mould or matrix, of that genial modesty or inmost grace of innocence which is the soul of true manhood, and keeps the eternal heavens themselves fresh and sweet. Hence alone it is that as we have just seen, the subject of this conviction is more than all others averse to evil-doing, and feels the soil of an evil thought, provided it be a really and not a mere

conventionally evil one, more poignantly than others do the grossest contact of literal defilement. In fact one's true conviction of sin is so clearly a mark of interior quickening, of advanced and advancing spiritual growth, that it is always sure to be begotten at its maturity of a hearty disgust of one's religious righteousness, instead of remorse for admitted evil. No one has begun to feel a spiritual conviction of sin, who does not perceive himself much more abhorrent to God by his virtues than his vices, by his piety than his profligacy: so that we may safely describe the sinner as one, who having laboriously tried to endue himself in all manner of legal or popularly accredited righteousness, finds it a garment infinitely scant of his soul's demands; finds it a garment indeed, like the fig leaves in Eden, much better adapted to expose his spiritual shanks than to conceal them.

Let us clearly make up our minds then at the outset, that a very great distinction obtains between the conscience of criminality and the conscience of sin, between the mere doing of evil and the feeling oneself to be evil. To do evil is one thing, the lowest thing a man can do; to feel oneself a sinner is a totally opposite thing, is indeed the height of a man's spiritual achievement, for this world at all events. To do evil is the heritage of every man of woman born. To feel a conscience of sin belongs only to those who are also spiritually born, born from above: that is to say, belongs only to those in whom a nascent sympathy with all Divine good-

ness is being interiorly and invisibly wrought. We all of us *do* evil by virtue of our Adamic generation; no one unaffectedly feels himself to *be* evil, but by virtue of a regeneration to which the Adamic or carnal principle is being Divinely subjected in the unseen depths of his mind. In a word evil-doing belongs to the moral sphere of our experience: the conscience of sin to the spiritual sphere. Evil-doing is a prompting of unregenerate nature, of the mind still in bondage to sense. Sin is always a judgment of the spiritual mind, the mind which has begun to be rationally disengaged from sense. The two things are as distinct as earth and heaven. Men have always done evil by the simple force of nature, as easily as they have drunk water. No one has ever really reckoned himself a sinner towards God but by a force altogether superior to nature, a Divine force which is urgent to redeem him from nature and clothe him with its own proper immortality. So that we may say without any hesitation that while all of us do evil naturally, only those of us really charge ourselves with sin who have been rendered inwardly averse to evil-doing: or what is the same thing, have been spiritually penetrated by the Divine perfection, and quickened in its image.

Now these two most distinct things, moral and spiritual existence, are so assiduously confounded by the traditional cant of the church, that no doctrine founded on their essential discrimination will be likely to receive the ready

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assent of our intelligence. My reader must bear with me therefore while I seek to vindicate at greater length the distinction I have already made, and rescue its enormous evangelical uses from the thorough contempt to which the church's besotted administration of sacred things has consigned them. We are habitually taught by her inspiration even in infancy to call ourselves sinners with a profuseness of indifference amounting to a most serious travesty and profanation of Divine truth. Go into any of our ordinary revivalist prayer-meetings, and you will find even the youngest spokesman dealing out confessions of sin so rollicking and glib, as to denote a wholly unsubdued natural force within, and avouch themselves a mere unprincipled parrotry of sacred utterances. The natural lust of distinction craves no sweeter pasturage, no subtler gratification, than is found oftentimes in these conventionally shaded and unsuspected places. The love of men's approbation is such an inveterate sly-boots, that it will drive us to deck ourselves in sackcloth and ashes, if the fashion only set in that direction, quite as gaily as in purple and fine linen.

The true confession of sin is never a verbal one; much less a public one. It is what the contrite heart, the heart truly touched with God's overpowering love, whispers and only whispers, to the proud uplifted head, in order to humble it to the dust. It comes accordingly with the utmost difficulty to one's own interior ear, and cannot possibly endure to publish itself. I do

not believe such a thing to be possible as a sincere ritual confession of sin. I do not believe that any Roman Catholic father-confessor ever listened to such a confession. They no doubt listen often enough to confessions of criminality; but confessions of sin, never. That conviction can be acknowledged only to God and oneself. In fact the confessional does its best to defeat the possibility of spiritual life in the penitent, because it perpetually subjects the intercourse between God and him, which is nothing if not private, to its own profane interference, to its own sordid mercantile or mediatorial fumbling. The least genuine conviction of sin, or what is the same thing, the feeblest dawn of spiritual life, opens one's eyes so very wide to the truth of things between universal man and God, that the priestly power of binding and loosing tumbles off incontinently into very puerile blasphemy: and even those solemn hortatory and precatory displays which take place in our Protestant symposia, confess themselves a mere instinctive effort of the æsthetic faculty to realize itself under difficulties, and vindicate its coming uses in the highest spheres of thought. A spiritual glimpse of the uncleanness enclosed in one's ritual righteousness, in one's conventional respectability, is by no means a festive experience, inspires no volubility, baffles utterly our ordinarily florid dramatic capabilities. It is in truth so simply fatal to the consecrated egotism of the heart, puts on so withering an aspect towards every devout and skulking form of selfish aspiration,

as to make the love of a humiliated harlot, and the prostrate guilt of a woman taken in the act of adultery, comparatively clean and innocent: infinitely more clean and innocent indeed to the manly bosom and therefore to the Divine bosom, than all the sanctimonious and obscene virtue that ever thrived by insulting them.

The total philosophic worth of what we call a conscience of sin, consists in its being a discovery by the private soul of the absolute equality of all men before God, and of the consequent falsity of its own pretension to stand any better there than anybody else; even this publican. Of course no man can feel this conviction very pungently, who has not previously felt a conviction of our moral or differential righteousness before God, and striven as much as possible to array himself in it. A man may have long had a conviction of criminality towards his fellow-man, may have consciously forfeited his fellow-man's approbation; but this does not constitute a conscience of sin by any means. This latter is a feeling in one's bosom of one's unlikeness to God, the source of one's life; a sickening sense of the ineffable smallness filthiness and self-seeking of all sorts that are wrapped up in one's best conventional virtue; and hence it is an utter destruction of one's natural pride in oneself. The mere criminal has no such feeling as this. Indeed the man who most abounds in actual injustice to his fellow-man, is the fullest of pride in himself, and the least cognizant of his total unlikeness to God.

He is in fact a God to himself, and cheerfully dispenses with any other. The life of nature, the mere animal life, is wholly unsubdued in such a man, while in every one of the least spiritual enlargement it has begun to take a wholly secondary place, has begun in fact to be very painfully depressed. This depressing influence which the conscience of sin exerts upon the natural life of its subject, is logically inevitable to the experience, because the experience he is actually undergoing, and which is masked by the conscience of sin, is that of a most real interior divorce from nature, and a profound spiritual acknowledgment of his exclusively Divine parentage. In other words it is only a living illustration of nature's habitually inverse or topsy-turvy way of reflecting spiritual truth. Nature is the realm of the finite, and is therefore of course and always the exact inversion of the infinite. Where the one says life, the other must necessarily say death. Where the one says light, the other must needs say darkness. Consequently when a man feels his inmost heart melting by the Divine compassion, and the foretaste of a mercy so tender as to withhold nothing from him, his native sense of merit instantly withers away, confesses itself the direst spiritual blasphemy, and leaves him no choice but to cry, God! be merciful to me a sinner! his base natural organs being incompetent to attest the blissful interior access of life in any positive worthy way, but only in that rude negative or inverse way.

Thus a conviction of sin is nature's inevitable confession of imbecility in presence of the Highest. To the angelic apprehension natural death signifies resurrection to life, because the angel sees the inner side of the phenomenon, we who are still in the flesh the outer side. When therefore a man calls himself a sinner, and most feels himself to be one, we are to look upon those expressions and that experience as brute nature's uncouth and obtuse homage to the Lord's presence in our nature; by no means as a direct or worthy manifestation of the great spiritual truth itself. *When a woman is in travail she has sorrow: but when her travail is over, she rejoices that a man is born into the world.* So precisely if we were once out of nature, we should doubtless speak a worthier speech. But so long as we have only natural organs, we must needs report every inner accession of life we experience in these broken accents of natural despair and death: or else be wholly misunderstood. No one in such a case has the least intention to intimate that God feels towards him the same condemnation he feels towards himself. He knows the contrary. He knows in all his bones that God feels infinitely more tenderness towards him than He feels towards Himself; and can by no possibility feel otherwise to all eternity. And it is precisely when he would express his panting conviction of this magnanimity, that all he already knows of life shrivels incontinently into death, and all he possesses of strength converts itself spontaneously

into corruption, by way of setting forth the ineffable splendor of the truth.

This is the short and sufficient reason why all they who are truly right-minded or reconciled to the Divine name, feel a sleepless conscience of sin; while they who are otherwise minded, being spiritually as full of self-righteousness as an egg is full of meat, enjoy a really undisturbed conscience towards God and their neighbor, and fill the foolish resounding earth with the equally fatiguing din of their piety and their pence.

CHAPTER XI.

As we have already seen, the conscience of sin, though it bear a purely spiritual flower, yet owns a moral root. That is to say, it always originates in a judgment which the soul passes upon itself for having actually done wrong. But the precise mischief which I lay to the charge of the technical church is, that she forever prevents this spiritual efflorescence in the conscience of her votaries, by persistently intensifying their moral consciousness, or making what is purely phenomenal and transitory in experience, dominate what alone is Divinely real and permanent. Her deepest instincts of self-preservation bind her to this course; bind her to perpetuate the prevalence of the flesh over the spirit; bind her to suppress as much as possible our spiritual development, by exacerbating to the utmost our moral consciousness. Why should this be so?

Let me repeat the question. The question is, why should the technical church be so much more alert to inflame the sentiment of a moral or differential righteousness among men, contingent upon a man's phenomenally free activity, than that of a spiritual or universal righteousness, contingent upon God's pure mercy?

The answer is not far to seek. For the spiritual man, the man who is not merely convicted by the letter of the law of doing evil, but much more deeply convinced by its spirit of being evil, at once confesses himself hopeless; gives himself up to a sheer dependence upon the unbought Divine mercy; renounces in other words all reliance upon any righteousness short of that Divine and infinite one which has been operated in his very nature, and which is alone attested by the Christian truth; and laughs a laugh consequently of the frankest scorn at the church's pretension to do anything more than typify such a righteousness; laughs a laugh in fact of boundless scorn at the pretension of all the petty priesthoods and all the petty sabbaths and all the petty sacraments and all the petty sanctities of whatever sort since time began and until time shall end, to do anything more than most faintly typify such a righteousness.

Now the church claims a real sanctity, not a typical one; claims to be itself a Divine finality and not a mere means to an end: and if she did not she would be obliged to fall behind the world in place of taking precedence of it. For the world is a Divine reality in its way, and would be excessively slow to postpone itself to anything not at the very least as real. At all events it would very properly hold a church which should admit itself to be of a purely figurative efficacy at an extremely low figure. There is accordingly nothing which the church so instinctively resents as this imputation of a

mere representative worth, of a purely symbolic sanctity, which yet is all that the spiritual mind accords it. And you easily perceive therefore that she spontaneously covets no such recognition, engenders of her own good-will no such offspring. If ever she opens a door to them, you may be sure it's never her front door to admit them, but only her back door to let them out. She of course does her best and most amiable to stifle them by assimilation before she expels them; but finding this impracticable, she contents herself with heralding them as infidel and reprobate to the mercenary scent of the mongrel gentlemen, half-secular half-religious, who hang upon her skirts, and do her dirty work, whether of public laudation or of public defamation, at the annual tariff of two dollars fifty cents to lay subscribers, with a liberal discount to the clergy.

It is thus only the moral man whom the church cares to deal with; the man in whom the intensest spiritual destitution is concealed under the rankest moral plenty; the man who estimating himself solely by the letter or semblance of righteousness is as yet wholly untaught and unchastened of its spirit or substance. This man is still alive, is still unslain in all his native arrogance, and covets nothing so much as the outward or public consecration of it. And this the church yields him in the frankest and fullest measure, in exchange for his voluntary submission to her. He rejoices in the church consequently, and she rejoices even more

in him. For while she fully authenticates the inmost pride of his heart and gives it a Divine *exequatur*, his adhesion alone confers upon her that precise fig-leaf of justification which she needs to shield her nakedness from carnal eyes, and to permit her still to claim the unchallenged primacy of the world. The pretension of the church either to the reverence or the revenues of the world would be preposterous even to her own eyes, if it were not backed by at least some semblance of use. And the semblance of use which the church enacts is that of sanctifying, or separating to God, the worldling who publicly professes religion, or publicly confesses his sins. The churchman, or sanctified worldling, differs from the still unsanctified one in absolutely no other respect than this, that the one makes a public profession of religion, which is a public confession of sin: the other does not. In all private respects they are so perfectly one, that the church is never weary of exhorting and persuading the still unsanctified worldling to come and be sanctified.

We may say then that the direct and inevitable, though most undesigned and unconscious, influence of the church has been to drug the world's conscience, or debauch its spiritual faculties, by administering to it this adroit opiate of a Divine ratification of all that the human heart infolds of the subtlest selfishness and lust. For of course the man who at her instance publicly confesses his sins, would be the last of men to do so, if she were going to condemn him

therefor, if she were going to give him thereupon a public reprobation and not the profusest public absolution. The only man who can sincerely afford to have his evil-deeds condemned by others, is he who first condemns himself; is the man in whom self-love has learned to yield the *pas* to neighborly love; in whom the subtler consciousness of evil-being has utterly consumed the grosser consciousness of evil-doing. It is the spiritual man in short; the man whom a sincere self-contempt renders perfectly indifferent to the contempt of other men; the man in whom the growth of a genuine humility exhausts that puerile pride of morality, or selfhood, which is the sole source of evil-doing. And every such man of course, having neither the expectation nor the desire of personal aggrandizement, is heartily indifferent alike to the church's benison and malison.

Not so the moral man, the man who is still in the vivid green of life's spring. He burns with the desire of commending *himself* to the Divine regard; craves nothing so intensely as God's approbation upon his personal character; aspires to nothing so much as to realize every signal mark of God's personal favor and delight. In truth every such man still revels in the heyday and delirium of self-love; and he would see the church hanged accordingly before he would accept an honest scourging at her hands; *i. e.* confess himself a sinner at the risk of provoking her faintest frown, at the risk of encountering anything indeed but her plenary justification.

This the church yields him in measure pressed down, heaped up, and running over, proclaiming it the sum of all righteousness, the one thing needful upon earth, the most acceptable and best requited service any man can render to God, to "get religion" as it is vulgarly termed; *i. e.* publicly identify himself with the interests of the church, and fulfil her requirements. Every man accordingly in whom the natural loves of self and the world so overlay his spiritual perception of the love of God and the neighbor, as to permit him to believe that the most High really countenances this ecclesiastical trumpery, really connives at this transparent whitening of sepulchres and making clean the mere outside of the platter, to the extent of pledging His immutable truth to the satisfaction of such grossly personal aims, such shamelessly selfish aspirations, enters her courts with joy: and is there very sure, unless he prove an exceptional person and listen betimes to the upbraidings of God's spirit within him, to become tenfold more the child of hell than he was originally.

Consider well what I say, for I believe it is a point of vital importance to the elucidation of our existing intellectual obscurities. The church leaves her votaries more stupidly blind to the spiritual depths of life than she finds them, because she does nothing but confirm nature's fundamental fallacy, which is that we stand primarily related to God not as a race but as individuals, that is to say morally, rather than

socially; hence that all the *data* of our moral consciousness are final or absolute, excluding any intrinsic subserviency to ulterior and superior social and æsthetic issues. Nature teaches us, and the church emphasizes the lesson with the whole force of her lungs, that God's true relation to us is a moral or personal one: that He loves us accordingly when we do well, and hates us when we do ill; loves us indeed with such absurd unreasonable partiality, and hates us with such absurd unreasonable malignity, that He does not hesitate to bestow upon us in the former case the eternal delights of heaven, and will not be bought off in the latter case from the gratification of an exquisite revenge, except by some altogether extraordinary concession to His self-love: so reducing the immaculate Name below the level of any brutal and bloody despot; reducing it in fact to something very like furious idiocy.

The very *gravamen* of our native ignorance and imbecility, is, this low conception we entertain of the relation between us and God, as being not a wholly creative or spiritual one, but a strictly moral or personal one. And the church keeps up her dishonest prestige in the world by diligently fomenting these natural prejudices of ours against God, teaching us to look upon Him as an essentially outward and therefore finite power, sustaining the most intensely literal and personal relations to us, and feeling precisely the same low emotions of moral or voluntary approbation and disapprobation towards

us, as we feel towards ourselves and towards each other. For example, I am tempted when young and immature to tell a lie or to do some other evil thing, to save myself from punishment or advance myself at my brother's expense. The evil is pronounced and palpable, and I secretly condemn myself for it, devoutly asking God's forgiveness. Now in these circumstances what does the church, speaking by my parents or guardians, do for my intellect? Does she afford me the least hint of anything involved in the transaction beyond the rupture of a purely *personal* tie between me and God, beyond the infraction of a merely *moral* obligation? Not a whit. She leaves the relation between us precisely as she finds it, that is, altogether actual and outward, so that if by prayer or other personal sacrifice I get rid of a whack at His powerful hands, I shall feel myself, to the extent of her influence over me, absolved from all further damage. Our basest natural prepossessions of Divine things being thus authenticated by her unfaithful stewardship, our spiritual faculties of course remain crippled, dwarfed, and distorted; so that if we ever do cease to regard God as a mere unparalleled policeman intent on catching us tripping, and come to the discernment of Him as a tender father burning to endue us in His own spotless righteousness, it will not only be without her help, but in defiance of her authority, and to the consequent discredit of our own good name.

What has been the consequence to the church

herself of the spiritual fatuity she has thus reduced us to? What has she herself gained by thus persistently degrading the soul's relation to God into the relation of an evil-doer to a policeman, of a poor timorous skulking mouse to an all-accomplished omnipotent infallible tabby? Why, she encourages every sneak of a fellow who has been robbing a henroost, and is dismally afraid of being found out, to snuggle unchallenged up to the very altars of God; while they to whom the bare thought of evil-doing brings disgust, invite at best her distant recognition, are very fortunate indeed if they do not incur her decided enmity. God's true church on earth is incapable of proving a refuge for roguery; it is a refuge only for those to whom roguery is an impossible thing. The evil-doer has no part nor lot in its inheritance, but only the man who is inhibited from moral or actual defilement, by an exclusively inward or spiritual cleansing. Yet the technical church has so effectually debased public sentiment on this entire subject, has so completely fixed our native imbecility and idiocy in Divine things, by persistently exalting the demands of religion above the demands of life, or what is the same thing, postponing the claims of human society, human fellowship, human equality, human brotherhood, to her own claims, that what we now recognize as the distinctively "religious" mind has at last got to be out of all comparison the least spiritual mind of the day. Talk to a "religious" man of what he conceives to be the highest themes, and you

will learn to your astonishment that God takes no interest in universal questions, that is, in those œconomical, political, and social questions, which interest all good and wise men in proportion to their goodness and wisdom; but only in some piddling private question of the "salvation" of this that and the other individual soul: such "salvation" apparently meaning first of all the deepest possible conviction on the part of its subject, that he is exposed to extreme personal danger at God's hands; and then a secondary persuasion that this primary conviction has gone far enough to placate the Divine animosity, and turn it away from its injurious designs. In other words, the "salvation" of my soul according to the current pulpit orthodoxy, amounts in plain English and when stripped of its euphuistic disguises to this: 1. the utmost possible excitation of my lowest and most selfish fears towards God; or the outbirth of a distrust towards Him in my bosom which would scandalize a Hottentot, and is able to justify itself only on the hypothesis of His essential inhumanity; and then 2. a persuasion that these base fears themselves have proved a tribute so well-pleasing to God, as to constitute a righteous basis of discrimination for Him between me and other men, and a righteous basis of hope consequently for me that I at least shall eventually escape His vindictive judgments.

Do not misunderstand me. I have no desire to deny, on the contrary I am particularly delighted to affirm, that there are numberless per-

sons clerical and lay within the bounds of the technical church who are spiritually disaffected to her righteousness, and therefore inwardly untouched by her plagues. And the church herself will be very sure to point to these persons who are nominally affiliated to her, as furnishing a decisive refutation of my criticism. But the artifice is too transparent to deceive. I have been speaking of the church exclusively in her historic aspect, as a visible institution distinct from the State. I have been contemplating religion exclusively as a separating economy, or in those features which give her formal discrimination from "the world." That a very Divine substance underlies this form, and is working itself out to view by means of it, I am not merely eager to admit but am prepared to demonstrate in due time and place. But nothing can be more opposed than substance and form; and here we are dealing exclusively with the latter. In point of form then, or so far as her ritual righteousness is concerned, I say that the church authenticates the lowest principles of human nature, and was intended so to do. No doubt many a man who is outwardly religious or embraced in the church's communion, is inwardly void of a separatist (*i. e.* Pharisaic) spirit, and full of a humane one. But that this is in spite of his technical "religion" and not because of it, in defiance of his church and not in affiance with it, is abundantly evident from the circumstance that such men are always regarded with more or less distrust by their eccle-

siastical superiors, with a certain dread lest they identify themselves with some or other of the "unsanctified" reform movements of the world. And then again it must be said of certain modifications of the church form itself in this country, the Unitarian and Universalist modifications especially, that at bottom they evince under the name of the church such a complete secularization of it, such a sheer though unconscious betrayal of its distinctive temper, and such a Providential moulding of it at last to the promotion of kindly feeling and good manners, as ought in all fairness to exempt them from hostile criticism. Unitarianism and Universalism call themselves the church, but then it is the church in an altogether Pickwickian sense of the word, or with pretensions so affable as to offend nobody. They cultivate the customary sabbatical sulks, or try to look as decently morose on their way to church as the more hardened sects; but in vain. You always detect a deprecatory wink underneath that restores them to your human sympathy, and turns the whole performance into mere unconscious mimicry, into pure devout comedy. Besides, on following them to church, did you ever hear a word from either of their pulpits which was not full of conciliation to all the world, or which the most sensitive *bonhomie* could reasonably object to?

Admit all this fifty times over: it does not disprove but only confirms what I have been all along saying of the religious temper in humanity when regarded in itself, and divested of

the modification it is daily receiving from the sentiment of human fellowship. Admit that there are many tender thoughtful suffering souls in "the church," who are hungering and thirsting for the true bread and true water of life, who are pining in other words for a living righteousness, and who consequently feel, though they would be horrified to avow, that their ritual righteousness is a mockery: clearly this fact inures not to the church's credit, but altogether to her discredit. For if the spiritual man within the church becomes spiritual not by cultivating her distinctive righteousness, but by discarding it; not by shutting up his sympathies to her communion, but by giving them the frankest expansion in every sphere of human need: then clearly the good conferred by the church is indirect not direct, stands less in what she gives than in what she withholds. In other words the distinction which ritual religion confers upon her votary before God, is purely literal or formal, and in the nature of things therefore cannot be spiritual or substantial: which is precisely all that I myself feel concerned to say.

The logic of the case is inexorable. If the church have any valid mission whatever to sanctify or set apart to God an earthly seed (and we shall not be able to explain the grandly leading part she has played in history on any feebler hypothesis) she must do it in one of two ways: that is, by giving them either a figurative or a real consecration; either a formal or a substantial righteousness; a purely literal or else a purely

spiritual sanctity. She cannot do both; because form and substance, letter and spirit, have nothing in common, or admit only an inverse never a direct congruity. They correspond of course, but only by inversion, never by continuity; as the shell of a nut corresponds to its kernel, or a glove to the hand. The reciprocal integrity of the two factors is conditioned upon their unswerving antagonism. If the letter of truth were ever a direct, and not in all cases an inverse, expression of its spirit, the spirit would be swallowed up or extinguished. If the Divine life in me (which is a positive quantity only on its spiritual side, and therefore demands a purely negative observance on its literal side, saying, thou shalt NOT do this, that, or the other) should seek to procure itself positive external expression as well, how could it succeed? What literal act, or series of literal acts, could positively express the love I bear my wife, my child, my friend, my fellow-man? It is evident that my love just in proportion to its purity, disclaims positive attestation; permits only a negative expression; *i. e.* an expression which consists in the abasement of my self-love. If any act, or any series of acts, were positively or adequately expressive of my love, they would exhaust it, and so turn it into aversion. For exhausted love always implies aversion to the object that has exhausted it. If by any one act I could fully express, *i. e.* satisfy, the affection I bear my wife, my child, my friend, my neighbor, my next act towards them would logically be one of exter-

mination: since, my affection for them being *ex hypothesi* used up or exhausted, I could not possibly feel any other sentiment towards them but aversion. Satisfied affection means aversion. Affection in proportion to its tenderness or vivacity seeks a perpetual gratification: *i. e.* desires to be unsatisfied. The very life of it lies in seeking and never accomplishing.[1]

Religion is bound then to elect between these alternatives; is bound to choose whether she will be regarded as bestowing a purely carnal and therefore representative righteousness upon her children; or a purely spiritual and therefore real righteousness.

If she choose the former alternative, she of course abdicates her own supremacy, vacates whatever authority she has hitherto claimed, surrenders her still undiminished theoretic primacy to the State, tumbles off at once in short into "the portion of weeds and outworn faces." This alternative accordingly is not to be thought of.

But now if she choose the latter alternative, as she unquestionably must do in sheer self-preservation, then she of necessity makes her appeal to that thing in her children which most alienates them from God and all Divine ways, namely, their self-love, their pride of selfhood, their moral force; and so perpetually fans in their bosoms, if she does not enkindle, hell's most subtle most genial and unsuspected flame. If my religious righteousness be a real one; in

[1] See Appendix, Note B.

other words, if the distinction of religious and profane among men which the church enacts be a valid distinction in God's sight: then unquestionably although worldly prudence, or the claims of Mammon, may forbid me overtly to urge the distinction, my fidelity to my own sincere religious convictions will commend it all the more warmly to my private or spiritual regard; so that practically I shall find myself cultivating whatever aspirations, desires, thoughts, and actions, may most justify the distinction, or most separate me from my neighbor: which is only saying in a roundabout way, that I shall abandon myself to the subtlest illusions of self-love, a self-love baptized with God's approbation and therefore proof against correction. A consecrated self-love may burn with an inmost tyranny and rapacity, and yet feel itself hardened against rebuke: for who can effectively rebuke what God Himself has approved? If my church-going, my public and private devotions, my reverence for sacred times and places, my fasts, my penitences, my abstinence from secular amusements, my zeal for the interests of the church, my liberal contributions to foreign and domestic missions, to the spread of bibles and tracts, and whatever other enterprises the church appoints; be, when sincerely carried out, a good thing in God's sight: if they constitute a basis of discrimination in His sight between me and other men who are utterly indifferent to such things, (and that they do so every pul-

No. pit in the land assures me, and what is more lives by assuring me): then I have an undeniable right to rejoice in God's personal favor to me, in His distinguishing grace as it is called; and am only too happy to welcome a gospel which so thoroughly authenticates all my native pride and lust of distinction.

CHAPTER XII.

Our true righteousness, the righteousness which God Himself operates in human nature, is spiritual not moral. It consists in no religious activity whatever, nor in any activity of any sort, but altogether in a spirit of unity with our brother, in a temper of perfect equality or fellowship between man and man.[1] Our moral experience has been wholly subordinate to this Divine end. Yet the church habitually misconceives our Providential destiny to the extent of regarding morality as itself a Divine end, and would consequently have prolonged the controversy between flesh and spirit — between base and superstructure — to all eternity, if the secular scientific understanding of man had not become Providentially aroused to its mission, and assumed to itself the guardianship of our associated destiny. What can be more incongruous with every Divine inspiration — what can be more odious, speaking after the manner of men of course, to the Divine mind — than the lesson which the church habitually inculcates upon the world, namely: the paramount claims which the interests of every man's own personal salvation at God's hands, have upon his attention and ac-

[1] See Appendix, Note C.

tivity? What can more fatally degrade the mind, than the persuasion so diligently fostered by the church, that God Himself is privy to these paltry personal anxieties of ours, accessory to these most shabby because most selfish aspirations on our part; that He is even then in fact best pleased with us, when our concern for ourselves has grown so importunate, as to make us shamelessly indifferent to what becomes of other men?

Of course no sane man can help cherishing the liveliest desire to grow in the knowledge of the Divine perfection, and livingly to illustrate it in the tenor of his own personal history. Indeed no sane man, if we use the word sanity in its highest sense, can help the endeavor to shape his life and understanding into the exactest imagery of the Divine; nor can any such man feel his Godward hope enfeebled, however ragged meanwhile his religious repute may be, so long as this aspiration remains unsmothered, or preserves its ordinary vivacity to his own consciousness. But has this man any fear about the salvation of his soul? Has he especially any fear of losing it through the inertness or indifference of his maker? Has he above all any dread of his future well-being becoming compromised by the positive ill-will of his creator; by the sentiment on His part of a petty malice and vindictiveness which would disgrace a Choctaw? Is the soul then in the church's estimation a *thing*, that it is thus liable to outward chances, as the being saved or lost at God's arbitrary pleasure?

I thought the soul meant the animating temper or spirit of one's life, whether one of conformity to all Divine truth and loveliness, or of abandonment to all the lusts of our native pride and covetousness. How can one's soul in this view be either lost or saved without one's own amplest consent? If indeed I am a low-minded person in the habitual tenor of my intercourse with my fellow-men: that is to say, if I habitually seek myself first and my neighbor last: I shall no doubt "lose my soul" as it is called; but it will clearly be by my own privity, and in spite of any amount of religious righteousness I may have incidentally contracted in my passage through the world. And if I am a pure-minded person on the other hand, content to do unto others as I would have them do unto me, I shall no doubt "save my soul" as it is called; but it will by no means be a salvation of it from any danger it encounters at God's hands, but purely at the hands of my own presumptuous self-will ignorance and wickedness.

The tap-root of every one's spiritual character is the conception he entertains of God: not the conception which he inherits, mind you, or lazily accepts at the hand of tradition; but that which he cultivates and cherishes; that which he spontaneously inclines to. If he really conceive God to be a being of infinite love; if he perceive that God is God and worthy of our spontaneous adoration, simply because His love for His creatures is wholly untainted by love for Himself; then of course he will aim at a spirit-

ual conformity with this perfection, and abhor nothing so much as an appeal to God's interested or mercenary regard. Nothing can more revolt a mind thus enlightened than the thought of enjoying a blessedness at God's hands, which all other men do not equally share. For such a man worships God no longer religiously but livingly, no longer outwardly but inwardly, having no favors to ask of Him, nor any possible bosom aspect towards Him which is not as devoid of ulterior design, which is not as intrinsically innocent and fragrant with an inmost worship, as the bosom aspect of the lily towards the sun. If on the other hand he conceive God to be a being of infinite self-love, and consequently of a vindictiveness unmatched by man or devil: a vindictiveness indeed so incomparable that hell's eternal torments are said only faintly to express its ineffable exhilaration, its insatiate gusto and greed: then of course his own answering self-love will become so preternaturally inflamed by the insecurity of his relation to a being upon whom he is so dependent, and who is yet so essentially unworthy of trust, that the demands of religion will necessarily absorb the attention which is primarily due to the demands of life, and the envenomed pursuit of his own safety leave him no breathing-spell of regard to bestow upon the interests of his neighbor.

It is this insane root of self-seeking, a self-seeking so fanatical as not to rest till it has bound God Himself to its helpless servitude, which makes the distinctively "religious" mind

everywhere clothe itself with such unhandsome foliage, everywhere bring forth such unmanly fruit. These results "leap at the eyes" in Catholic countries where "religion" claims an establishment of its own, unrestricted as in Protestant countries by the commixture of the secular element; and where consequently it is at liberty to ultimate its peculiar instincts in every appropriate sensible form. It is very curious to observe accordingly how in these countries its predominant *animus* of selfishness betrays itself, in the dishonor which is most religiously cast upon the procreative faculty. The church declares that religion has no practical aim but to save the soul of its votary alive for another world than this; that it has no productive uses accordingly in this world; and that every one who worthily bears its name should therefore compel himself to celibacy: thus outraging the noblest sentiment of our nature, that which most enshrines the creative benignity since it furnishes the sole foundation of the social instinct, namely, the chaste reciprocal love of the sexes: and driving men and women — for nature must somehow have her own in everybody — either to dishonest delights which degrade the mind, or else to solitary vices which shatter God's living temple itself, the holy human body.[1] It shuts up the sexes each by itself in great dungeons denominated religious-houses, where God's shrinking angels overhear nothing more honest than the sobs of heavenly innocence

[1] See Appendix, Note D.

tortured into guilt; it denaturalizes all true manhood in its monks, by making their aims purely passive and personal; it libels all true womanhood in the person of its nuns, by turning them from fruitful wives and mothers into barren professional nurses; it clothes both monk and nun with garments revolting to sense; and stamps them all over with such an ostentatious desecration of the body, as reveals to your very senses how close the connection is between spiritual pride within the bosom — the pride of a peculiar sanctity, of a relation to God unshared by other men — and the grossest outward carnality. One reconciles himself after a while to the sight of priest and monk abroad: for we men are such born nuisances as yet everywhere, especially under our European or moral form of development, which exhibits the heart or feminine element abjectly servile to the head or masculine element, that a mere ritual righteousness would seem to be our proper badge, the only approximation we can yet make to God's image. But woman when exempted from our bedevilment, when loosed from our gross Adamic servitude, and left to herself, to her own spontaneous tendencies, is gentle and modest and good: *i. e.* lives already and does not merely aspire to live; obeys a direct Divine inspiration, conceives of the holy Ghost, and brings forth immaculate fruit. She has no aptitude for ritual religion save as a way of escape from our brutality, from the dreariness we impose upon her existence. For she herself when freely pro-

nounced is truly the consummation of the literal church, the end of all the culture the race has undergone on earth; perfect womanhood in nature meaning nothing more and nothing less than the visible form of our unseen spiritual manhood. Woman is the normal outcome — at once perfect flower and perfect fruit — of human progress in interior invisible realms of being: so that we may at any time exactly measure the comparative advance of the public mind, the comparative spirituality of the public conscience, by the esteem it accords and the courtesy it decrees to woman.

The commixture of the secular element with the "religious" is precisely what differences the Protestant evolution of religion from the Catholic. The two churches are respectively letter and spirit, body and soul, root and stem, seed and flower: which is what makes them so cordially inimical to each other, and so desirous to get out of each other's grasp. The Protestant church germinates in Catholicism; the Catholic church effloresces in Protestantism. They are respectively gross carnal husk, and refined spiritual fruit. Thus Catholicism restricts "religion" to its priests and other emasculate orders, and allows the laity no nearness to God but what comes through their intercession; to that extent at all events keeping the laity humble and sweet, *i. e.* uncorroded by the "religious" virus, or the pretension of a peculiar sanctity towards God. And Protestantism does nothing hereupon but deny the "religious" celibacy, or proceed to

make it fruitful by marrying it to the secular life; so in effect covering the whole congregation with the priestly pretension, and turning all that was before humble and sweet into flatulent and sour.[1] In the Jewish church the Lord had respect to one person, to him who was of a contrite spirit, or felt himself none the better for the national holiness. So also in the Catholic church there was one element not unlovely, because it was devoid of religious pretension; and this was the lay element. But Protestantism logically robs the Lord even of this delight, by exalting the layman into the clerk, or diffusing the odor of sanctity over the whole congregation: so reorganizing between herself and the world the self-same odious discrimination which Catholicism enacted within the household of faith, or between priest and layman. Catholicism stigmatizes its priest alone to a spiritual regard; stamps the man who separates himself from the common life of his kind, and ostentatiously devotes himself to God, with an unloveliness palpable even to sense: but it leaves the great common life untouched. And moreover it allows this priest himself to assume only an official or representative holiness, and denies him the least personal consequence: so leaving open a clean door of escape from the spiritual peril involved in the office, to every one whose

[1] It is obvious of course that I am here characterizing these churches as to their logical significance only. The vast majority of either church is practically indifferent to the ruling spirit of the church, and unhurt by it; though unhappily it is only a numerical, by no means an influential majority.

cultivated instincts avert them from it. But Protestantism remorselessly obliterates every vestige of this original Divine mercy, by denying the discrimination of priest and layman, and teaching its layman indeed to aspire to a sanctity to which the Catholic priest theoretically makes no pretension, a direct personal sanctity in the last degree revolting to truth and decency.

In Protestant countries accordingly you miss those gross outward and therefore comparatively harmless fruits, which grow out of the separation of the two elements. You see no fat lazy loafing monks, images of man's essential arrogance and imbecility: no starched demure stealthy-paced nuns, images of the lifeless womanhood engendered by such a manhood; a manhood that robs woman of her native juices, betrays her essential conjugality, falsifies her rightful maternity, leaves her teeming womb unquickened, and turns the stainless nurture of her bosom to waste.[1] You see rather those subtler interior forms of evil which flow from the commixture of the two elements while as yet such commixture is regarded as itself a Divine finality, or is not seen to be wholly tributary to ulterior social ends. Protestant men and women,

[1] The nun reproduces Eve almost to sight in her rib-state, or before she became Divinely qualified to attract the man's desire. It is curious to observe how mechanical and osseous an aspect the nun's conventional costume and demeanor impart to her. Eve herself in her undeveloped or rib-state symbolizes the unquickened selfhood or freedom of man, its condition while still in contented vassalage to natural appetite and passion, before moral consciousness has dawned.

those who have any official or social consequence in the church, are apt to exhibit a high-flown religious pride, a spiritual flatulence and sourness of stomach, which you do not find under the Catholic administration. Get over the visible wall of separation between you and the priest, between you and the *religieuse;* get beneath the serge of the one and the buckram of the other; and you will find a jolly soul of man attuned to all natural fellowship in joy or grief; you will find a soft womanly heart instinct with conjugal grace and maternal tenderness. But our conspicuous Protestant religiosities male and female — such of them as are really animated by the spirit of Protestantism — are sweeter on the surface than in the depths. Their moral fine-linen disguises any amount of spiritual squalor. For they believe themselves personally appreciable to the Lord's heart; make the culmination of their faith to consist in "a personal assurance" towards God or confidence of acceptance at His hands, which is proof against all adverse probabilities, and therefore intensely insulting to more modest natures. The deeper you descend in Protestantism the worse, spiritually considered, do you find its logical results; until at last you get down to our modern Revivalism, which is religion stripped of its last rag of modesty, of its last decorous vestige of typicality, denuded of all that superb spiritual or universal significance which once inwardly sanctified it, and reduced to a grovelling mercantile commerce between God and the soul, in-

expressibly repugnant to the spiritual truth of the case.

It is an observation very frequently made, that the least nutritive and exhilarating men one encounters anywhere nowadays, are either men of office in the technical church, or else of eminence in that factitious society upon which the church habitually browses. The most ungenerous style of manhood now visible to a spiritual regard, seems precisely what is required for the highest places of our Zion; men who suffocate God's free breathing in you whenever you approach them, and fairly force upon you the conviction that professional religion — whatever great uses once redeemed it — is now become fatal to all humane culture, and attractive only to the vain, the frivolous, the despotic, the self-seeking. I know perfectly that vast numbers in the technical church do not spiritually belong to it, and no more dream of cherishing an ecclesiastical or any other personal claim to God's favor, than they dream of renouncing it. But to say nothing of the obvious dislocation which every such mind when much in earnest about religious things, is under in having any ecclesiastical position; to say nothing of the inevitable conflict and anguish every such mind must more or less reap in that position: it suffices to reflect that such persons, like similar persons everywhere, are what they are only by virtue of the unimpeded indwelling of God's impartial spirit; thus by virtue of their individual exemption from the ecclesiastical temper, and by no means

of their subjection to it. The church-spirit is now precisely what it was at Christ's literal advent, the concentrated spirit of hell in all its true votaries: so that we daily see the truth of Christ's words illustrated on every hand, when he said that at his second or invisible spiritual coming, the opposition he should encounter would be not from the world but from the church: from those who having always been most eager to cover him with their slavering personal adulation, while they were utterly recreant to his spiritual obedience, would gnash their teeth in unaffected rage, at finding themselves passed by and the technical infidel and worldling welcomed.

Yet we have the hardihood to talk of the Jew, and denounce his implacable self-righteousness, his implacable animosity to Divine things: as if the true Judæa, the only Judæa God sees or cares about, were not a spiritual country, the Judæa of the uncultivated human heart whether nominally Pagan or Christian. The true Jew in the authentic spiritual sense of the designation, is to be found skulking in every most baptized nook and cranny of our orthodox Christian bosoms; and the puny crucifixion to which his carnal prototype subjected the Lord of life in the letter, is but an image of that which we daily reënact with keener cruelty in the spirit. The Jew is only a luminous Providential type of the universal religious conscience, before it has undergone the softening influence of history; of that proud diabolic temper which urges every

man of strictly ecclesiastical lineage and nurture, to make much of the flimsy formal peculiarities which distinguish him from other men, in utter contempt of that real and spiritual destitution which obliterates these superficial differences, and makes him profoundly one with all other men. The only conscience the religious man should have is a conscience of sin, and consequently of unaffected death to every cherished personal pretension. He in whom religion has done its perfect work, or fulfilled its errand of death, is a man of such unforced humility as to be necessarily full of generosity towards all other men. He is not only incapable of desiring, he cannot even endure any evidence of, a tenderer Divine regard towards himself than towards the veriest reprobate who expiates his crimes on the gallows.

Plain as all this is, there is yet no genuine churchman throughout Christendom, from the pope of Rome down to Brigham Young, who does not practically reproduce the Jewish infatuation; who does not most religiously claim an absolute or individual consequence in God's sight; who does not in other words aspire to win God's personal notice and approbation. Our religious development could have done us no harm, if we had only borne in mind that religion was never intended to be a finality, but at best only an exquisite type or mould by the final breaking up of which a very real life of man would emerge, a life of genuine fellowship and love: and that conse-

quently whenever it was valued for its own sake and apart from this most human use, it would become an unmixed nuisance. Yet this is precisely what the church has brought upon us. A religious good name, the admiration of the devout world, is the subtlest remaining lure that hell offers to human vanity. Many a man accordingly who wouldn't give the toss of a copper to save the human race from perdition, who wouldn't put his heel where his toe stands to save a brother from the gallows, or snatch a sister from the stews, except for the public odium of the thing; yet manifests a frenzied zeal and particularity of devout observance, which would impoverish the soul of a mouse. We are so insanely bent on securing God's favor to us individually, on achieving our own personal salvation at His reluctant hands, that we have no thought or credence to bestow upon his great and only work, which is that of our common natural redemption. Our insane dread of God's personal damnation, our insane hope of His personal salvation, so inflame all that is basest and most selfish in our natures, that we have almost no faculty left for comprehending His designs of universal love. We are brutally content in fact to let the whole race go to the devil, provided we can succeed in saving our own pigmy souls alive. As if God had ever proposed so hopeless a labor to us! As if He had ever set us individually to redeem ourselves from our native infirmity, and restore our hearts a pure offering to Him! On the contrary He invaria-

bly challenges this as His own exclusive prerogative, and bids us behold it perfectly vindicated in the splendors of Christ's redemption. He has always been quite rich enough to do without our help, and our sole misery has been, that we have so twisted religion from a sincere testimony of this truth into a lying witness of its precise opposite, that we are now sophisticated apparently past all hope of recovery.

Yes, religion is now become the idol of men's impure devotion, the one conventional decency which more effectually separates man from God as to the spirit of his mind, than all the technical vice and crime extant. The pretension of the church to be something more than a typical economy, to organize in fact the distinction of sacred and profane among men as they stand severally related to her interests, and give it the sanction of God's approbation, has been so long unquestioned as to render a spiritual conviction of sin the rarest of actual accomplishments, by leading almost all men to believe that this distinction of the church and the world finds its true authentication in God's infinite perfection, rather than our carnal infirmity. The church everywhere maintains that the true aim of religion has been to attest a difference in human virtue, to certify that certain persons are purer and better in God's estimation than other persons, and will enjoy a superior felicity at His hands. The truth is most exactly and intensely contrary. The total religious experience of the race has taken place in the interest of our humility not

of our pride. The whole meaning of the technical church on earth — and this accounts for the very limited empire it has had — has been to intensify the pretension of a private righteousness among men, or draw it out in great legible characters plain to every sense, in order the more signally to explode it, by proving that there is absolutely nothing common or unclean in humanity, that the Divine hand hallows whatsoever it touches. Religion was never intended to give its followers life but death; was never intended to affirm our individual wealth but our universal penury. It was intended to reveal to them the dearth of life they have in themselves as morally or finitely constituted, in order to prepare them for that fulness of life they shall find in each other as socially constituted. The sole office of the church has been the perfect manifestation of the evil which is in us as naturally begotten; in order to our adequate appreciation of that infinite good which shall be in us as Divinely created. Its invariable genuine function has been so to stir up and work out in visible form the latent pride and covetousness of the human bosom, that we should be compelled of ourselves to loathe and renounce them, and in that sincere way become fitted for our eternal beatitude. The history of the church is the history of human corruption; and the only emphatic testimony it bears is to the slender reliance which is to be placed upon the most devout pretensions. No man accordingly is in so dangerous a condition spiritually, or with reference to his true life,

as he who finds his religion a comfort to him. Religion is essentially a state of dis-ease, and he to whom it brings repose may assure himself that the root of the matter is not in him. The less our religion satisfies us, the more it mortifies and vexes us, the nearer we are to that benign and blessed life to which alone it is destined to minister. The end of all religious culture is so to disgust us with the responsibility of our own souls, with the provision of our own righteousness, as to make us heartily renounce it, and accept life of mere mercy at God's hands instead. It chases our selfishness into its most specious retreats; it ferrets it out of its most sanctified strong-holds; and fills us at length with so cordial a shame, with a mind so full of repentance towards the patient all suffering all yielding Love, that the natural aristocracy of our hearts, — their prevalent lust of distinction — confesses itself the sheer spiritual vulgarity it is; and one would henceforth go to hell rather than heaven, unless he could go there upon a strictly democratic footing.

To say the whole thing in one word: the efficacy of religion is totally and intensely purgative; and he who insists upon finding it nutritive errs from the way of life altogether. The most living men in history, those who have evinced the profoundest spiritual quickening, have felt the most harrowing and pertinacious conscience of sin, have pungently discerned the hopeless spiritual rottenness which lay concealed under their fairest moral and religious seeming. Such men accordingly have felt the imperious

need of a really Divine righteousness, and have spurned the empty typicality of the church whenever she has pretended to appease that immortal want. They see that God's quarrel is never with the obvious and conceded evil of mankind, because evil ever tends by its own limitation to punish and correct itself: and besides God's sole creative delight and vocation is to redeem men out of their admitted evil: but only with its most unquestioned and established good. The true enemy of God from the beginning of history has never been our poverty but our wealth; has never been our disease but our health; has never been our sins but always our most unsuspected and accredited righteousness. The sinner in other words and not the saint is as yet God's best achievement in human nature: when this achievement becomes somewhat universalized by society itself coming to the consciousness of its shortcomings, we shall at last have a righteousness and a health and a wealth which shall never pass away, which shall be for the first time on earth Divine and permanent. The sinner, the man who most feels the disproportion which nature puts him under towards God, and therefore best appreciates the boundless mercy of their spiritual conjunction, is the cordial friend of God, is unaffectedly genial and easy to be entreated, lending himself freely to every humane enterprise and endeavor. It is in the heart of the sullen devotee alone that you hear the gnawing of the worm that never

dies, the worm of an insatiate spiritual pride; and feel the heat of that devouring flame which can never be quenched, the flame of an ambition so aspiring that if prudence were not painfully imposed upon it it would overtop the throne of God itself.

CHAPTER XIII.

No one can know better than myself how exquisitely revolting to our professional religious pride, all the preceding strain of sentiment must necessarily appear. But then we must remember that our current religious pride is the indisputable inward truth of which the Jew was but the outward visible type; the profound spiritual substance of which he was the flimsy natural symbol or shadow. We exhibit spiritually to all the extent of the ecclesiastical temper in us, the very same relation to the Divine Truth that he exhibited literally; a relation of professed zealous allegiance but of real indifference and hostility, of real denial and betrayal. We have reached the climax of the church's spiritual history prefigured by the apostleship of Judas Iscariot: for all the personal incidents of Christ's history are so many most strict types or shadows of what is actually transpiring in the unseen depths of our Christian bosoms. Thus the literal crucifixion which he underwent at the hands of Jew and Roman, only typified the spiritual betrayal and crucifixion his truth should undergo at the hands of Christian priests and kings. And yet even as this literal crucifixion was the sign of a great Divine mercy to be ac-

complished by the fall of Jerusalem, and the consequent spread of the Christian church over the whole area of the Roman empire: so now the spiritual crucifixion which the truth is undergoing at the hands of the church, is itself in its turn but the harbinger of an awful and undreamt-of Divine mercy to the world. For this infidelity of the church to the spirit of its Founder, is only a signal Providential demonstration of the incompetency of the mere religious conscience spiritually to fulfil the Christian truth; livingly to reflect or reproduce the Divine spirit; and a precious pledge therefore of that superb resurrection to life which it is soon to undergo in all the features of our social manhood, in all the forms of our spontaneous or æsthetic activity.

This indeed is the grand burden of the gospel: the establishment of God's kingdom ON EARTH, or the reduction of the natural mind itself to permanent Divine order: because this consummation alone as we shall see by and by guarantees both the integrity and the permanence of the spiritual creation. What we call a conviction of sin in the individual mind has had no other end than to pave the way for a similar generalized conviction in the total mind of society. The dogma of individual regeneration is only a rude imperfect germ and prophecy of the higher truth of our universal natural regeneration in the Christ: has had no other purpose than temporarily to house this grander truth, until such time as the human mind should

be Providentially ripe to receive it. And the thing now most incumbent upon all those who have the least spiritual discernment of Christ's work, is as I have already said, to revivify and aggrandize the old dogma by lifting it at once out of its wholly lifeless and Pharisaic private interpretation, into its true spiritual scope and dignity in application to the race exclusively.

Whatsoever is true of the individual in his degree, is true of the race in its degree. Human society, human fellowship, human equality, human brotherhood, which constitutes the achievement of God's spirit in our nature, or the perfection of man's destiny on earth, comes about precisely as my reader's and my individual regeneration does, namely: by such a manifestation to men's minds of the evils that are incident to our rudimentary unscientific methods of intercourse, as will make them heartily ashamed of themselves, heartily sick of their sacerdotal and political guides, and lead them eventually to demand what are those Divine laws of order for man in nature, which shall insure us pure souls in healthy bodies. The seeming obduracy of the heavens to our suffering, which so often strikes us with amazement, is in truth but the outward form of the Divinest pity; because what the Divine pity wants to work in us by permitting us this acute experience of evil physical and moral, is a conviction of our spiritual rottenness, or the humiliation of our infernal pride in ourselves, which is the hidden and sole source of these manifest forms of evil, and

which has only got to be recognized in order to insure their eternal drying up. Moral and physical evil will abound and increase upon us, until we learn to distrust our own public righteousness, until we learn to scrutinize the spirit we are of socially, and demand whether the cause of this evil is not in our prevalent inhumanity one to another as organized in our boasted political and religious institutions. When we are thus driven to explore the true causes of the hideous evils we are undergoing, we shall at once get rid of them not only temporarily but eternally; not only vacate the present existence of them, but put away all possible ground of their future recurrence.

Crime vice and poverty are to the social body, what deafness small-pox and the loss of children are to me. They are odious disgusting things, producing the utmost possible discomfort, and leading thoughtful minds to inquire their meaning, to demand where the blame of them lies. The Lord cannot be bribed to take the least interest in these passing troubles any more than he does in my toothache and jaundice; because what He yearns for in both cases alike is not our present escape from evil merely, but our eternal exemption from all liability to it. How does such exemption come about socially? Why by society itself in the person of its leading minds feeling the precise conviction, acknowledging the precise conscience, of sin, that my reader and I feel and acknowledge: by society herself seriously setting out to do justice to all her

members, or organizing herself in strict accordance with the truth of every man's equality with every other man. We think that God hates the thief, the adulterer, the murderer, and applauds us decent people when we send them to prison and the scaffold. There is no grosser superstition. We it is who, spiritually viewed, are in His pure sight the true thieves adulterers and murderers; because we in our overpowering lust of mammon are content to live in such glaring relations of inequality one with another, as virtually condemn the vast majority of men to degrading want and ignorance, and lift a smaller class into idle and superfluous abundance. Only when we shall be brought to view ourselves somewhat in this light; only when we rich and reputable ones of the earth become, through the ever growing tyranny of these atrocious forms of disease vice and crime quickened to perceive our own complicity in them, and humble our proud heads to the extent of beseeching science to tell us what God's social requirements in human nature are: shall we find our evils abating, and our long dismal night of anguish giving way to the beams of God's healing and eternal day.

Nothing stands in the way of this great consummation, I repeat, but the persistent dishonor which our hereditary orthodoxy does the Divine name, in belittling His mercy to the dimensions of the mere private soul, and rendering it indifferent to the awful wants of the race. Everywhere but in the church itself you find men

ready to perceive, that Christ had no private personal ends, but only a universal one; which was the redemption of our very nature itself from disease and death. The Christian facts, the wondrous words and deeds of Christ, so authenticate and inflame the generosity and manliness of the public conscience, as to make it intolerable for us any longer to conceive that God looks upon any portion of his creation as hopelessly degraded: as to lead us in fact to suspect that what we with our finite outward sense see to be positive degradation, He with His infinite inner eye sees to be so much negative spiritual advance. One's heart revolts from the current orthodoxy, even before his head is able to justify the revolt by chapter and verse. I am sure I never at my blindest prayed to God half so earnestly to save my own soul, as to be saved from those excruciating thoughts of Him which tempted me to fear that anybody's soul could ever lack at His hands all the succor and furtherance it needed.

At any rate Christianity is a full response to all such idle fears. It bears a far more direct relation to the public life of man than to the individual one. Its whole bearing indeed upon the private bosom, is a fruit of its bearing upon the destiny of the race; and is strictly unintelligible apart from it. The doctrine of the Divine NATURAL Humanity, or of Christ's Divine glorification down to his actual flesh and bones, implies of course that God's great redemption is wrought not in isolated individual minds here

and there, but in the very stuff of human nature itself, in the commonest affections appetites and passions of universal man: a redeeming regenerating and transforming work, which shall lift all mankind into intimate and endless union with God, and so become the basis of a new spiritual development in the individual soul past all prophecy to foretell. Every church on earth is doomed to perish, except the Christian church; because all but it are destitute of a philosophic basis, that is, profess no doctrine of God in nature, but only in the private soul. The Christian church is immortal because its fundamental dogma involves a doctrine of God in nature so ample and clear, as to satisfy every profoundest want of the heart and every most urgent demand of the head towards God forever. Christianity, which on its literal side is an affirmation of the perfect union of the Divine and Human natures in Christ, means on its interior spiritual side neither more nor less than this: that underneath our reviled despised and unhandsome nature, underneath all its lasciviousness and avarice and tyrannous self-seeking of whatever kind, there yet lie unsuspected such capacities of disinterested action, of jubilant self-abandonment, of cordial devotion to productive use, of chaste and generous love, of magnanimous friendship, of childlike innocence and peace in short in every sphere of activity, as will make all that men have feebly dreamt of heaven yet inevitable upon earth. We have long agreed that God was capable of doing very

wonderful things for us spiritually, or by means of our strictly individual regeneration: but we never dared to suppose that this was only because He was capable of doing so much more wonderful things for our nature. And yet this is the exact truth of the case, if Christianity be true, which suspends our individual regeneration upon our acknowledgment of the redemption effected by Christ in our nature. "The regeneration of a man," says Swedenborg in his Coronis, or Appendix to the True Christian Religion, "which is his liberation from evils and falsities, is a particular redemption by the Lord, existing from his general redemption."

But Christianity does not merely tell us that God is able and willing to bring nature itself up to the point of a complete redemption from evil: it tells us that this redemption is already virtually accomplished in the life of Christ. All the events of Christ's birth life death and resurrection were only so many ultimate tokens or natural effects of the accomplishment of this great result in interior realms of being. These events all took place in nature because the Divine Love is so infinitely able, beyond our poor imagination to conceive, to reconcile self-love and brotherly love, or hell and heaven, in the inmost invisible heart of the race, as that a NEW LIFE shall thereby take place on earth more glorious to God, more blessed to man, than it has entered into the heart of angel or of seraph to conceive: a life in which the hitherto despised and rejected principle of self-love (evil or hell) be-

comes itself the invincible guarantee of endless peace and order. It is the distinctive splendor of the Christian truth that it alone has dared to make not the saint but the sinner, not the angel but the devil, not good but evil, the inexpugnable bulwark of God's power. All of our mendicant theologies and philosophies recoil before this ghastly face of evil. Only that patient and faultless life begun in Bethlehem and ended on Calvary, tells us to what endless human worth, to what boundless human and Divine delight, the existence of what we call evil is in God's great unstinted providence spontaneously subservient. Christ was born subject to the most diabolic fanaticism ever enkindled on earth; the fanaticism of the Jew in behalf of a kingdom of God which should put all nations under the Jewish feet. Of course like every child he believed his natural traditions with unsuspecting confidence; listened devoutly to the recorded promises of God to bless Israel and Judah with unheard of blessing; and saw himself with childish pleasure pointed to by all about him as the person through whom these long-waiting promises were to be at last fulfilled. Put yourself, reader, in that tender child's place. Would it have been easy, think you, to have resisted what he resisted? To have spurned from your lip the brimming cup of devout intoxication which he spurned from his? No human being, neither parent friend nor teacher, stood by to help him in those dire moments against his own devout patriotic natural heart. Every one about

him on the contrary joyfully sided with his great temptation, and did his stupid best to render it irresistible. It was a temptation more subtle and deadly, more heaped up pressed down and running over with the combined and concentrated virus both of heaven and hell, than ever man before or since confronted; and he confronted it all alone. He stood indeed more alone, that is, less helped by human sympathy or intelligence, than any man ever stood in human history, dazzled, amazed, confounded, but never overcome, by the diabolic lure which both his religion and his love of country almost irresistibly commended to him. Every subtlest hell and every infirm heaven known to human experience, flowed cordially and unrebuked into a personal ambition so patriotic, into a personal hope and aspiration so religious. All the heaped up avarice of the human heart, all its aspirations of religious preëminence, all its lust of spiritual and material aggrandizement, all its cherished dreams of earthly dominion, of wealth, of pleasure, of sensual bliss; all its instincts of love, of friendship, of family and national allegiance, rushed headlong into the fulfilment of a career so conventionally blameless, as the waters of inland rivers rush headlong into the sea: but that young bosom, though it sweat blood under the unexampled agony of its conflict, never for an instant faltered, until it had so perfectly coördinated within itself the hitherto warring powers of self-love and brotherly love (or the profoundest hell and the highest heaven) with each other,

and then reduced them both to the equal allegiance of the Divine or universal love, as to lap them both thenceforth in eternal unity; and give consequently to the entire spiritual universe, the universe of the human mind, the impress of his unitary personality, the impress of a glorified NATURAL man.

To say all in a word. God's sole great purpose in history is the elevation of the natural man himself out of the mud and mire of his origin; or the cleansing and building up of our very bodies themselves into temples of the Holy Ghost, so that they will no longer obstruct but only promote the soul. Christianity implies above all things else a life of innocence, of spotless innocence, FOR MAN ON EARTH: the sooner accordingly we take our brethren out of want and ignorance by giving them social recognition and so restoring them to God, the sooner we shall find ourselves enjoying the unspeakable delights of God's kingdom upon earth. No man does evil untempted; that is, without he have all other men to help him do it by standing aloof from him, or leaving him in abject penury physical moral and spiritual. Let us therefore when society points to her thieves her adulterers her murderers, saying lo! the sinners! boldly give her the lie, saying: "What does all this paltry evil-doing on their part amount to when weighed against your stupendous and unconscious evil-being, your organized and spiritual inclemency of man to man? These men indeed are hideous forms of evil-doers; they sin

flagrantly against your conventions; but it is only because your conventions first stint their nature of its fair expansion, deny it its due and honest satisfactions. You are, first of all, a niggard steward to them of Divine bounties; and God's quarrel therefore is primarily with you and only indirectly with them."

Our hereditary ecclesiastical habits of mind however have left us so little spiritual innocence, have so inflamed us with mercenary intentions towards God, so armed us with every sneaking private personal design upon His bounty, that we are quite as blind to the actual truth of things as our Jewish prototype himself was, and find ourselves exposed to precisely similar judgments. Surely no nation was ever more punctilious in its purely religious worship than ours was two short years ago. Yet here we are to-day politically rent and peeled as by the lightning of a Divine displeasure. What is the inference? What can it be but that God had a just disdain of our hypocrisy, of our complacent religious comedy; that He saw it to indicate no living sympathy with His excellent name but only a zealous desire to cajole and keep Him quiet, while we were filling our felonious pockets with dollars coined out of the sweat and blood of His and our helpless ill-starred brethren? What a scandal it is to Christianity, that men professing for nineteen centuries to revere its hallowed memorials concerning God and our relations to Him, should yet believe Him capable of occupying Himself with this ritual rub-

bish,[1] while myriads of His own adopted flesh and blood are starving even for the base food of the body, let alone the nobler food of the mind; while the gambling house the grog shop and the brothel are recognized necessities of our social fabric; while the interests of one nation and one class of men are organized in ruthless hostility to those of another nation and another class; while the innocence of youth is offered up every day a smoking holocaust upon the altars of mammon, and the native purity of woman gives only an added zest to the diabolic enterprise of her undoing! Though an angel from heaven come to us with any such drivel, let us fling back the blasphemy in his brazen face. No thoughtful man dare any longer deny that God is scandalized past all endurance by our prevalent religious hypocrisy, and the boundless political effrontery which it engenders. Honest minds everywhere are beginning to recognize the essential humanity of God, and to disuse these old insignia of a Pagan ignorance and imbecility. Everywhere men are refusing any longer to regard God as that omnipotent lordly Jupiter they once did, revelling in his own unemployed strength, and looking down in contempt upon modes of life infinitely less luxurious of course, but also infinitely sweeter and more honest than his own; his very goodness being at best but an occasional caprice of his wanton unprincipled power: and are coming to regard Him in His Christian aspect exclusively, that is, as an exqui-

[1] See Appendix, Note E.

sitely human force, with no unemployed or superfluous strength on hand, all His strength indeed being but the ceaseless efflux of His unstained goodness and truth, making the winds eternally to blow, the waters to flow, and the grass to grow, for the sustenance and recreation of universal man. It is only as an every way present help to our perplexities that God reveals Himself in Christ, and no longer as a future one; a help to the very perplexities we are now undergoing public and private, social and moral. And we are miserably mistaken if we suppose that we are going to get His help by cultivating any longer a mere religious righteousness; *i. e.* by fixing our hope upon some life or righteousness stored up for us beyond the grave, to the practical neglect of that more urgent life or righteousness which now is. Our eternal interests are of course the only real ones; but these are the interests of our true manhood, and have therefore no more relevancy to the life beyond the grave than they have to that now present. They have no relevancy to time or space whatever, but only to the habitual and cultivated temper of our own minds, whether it be one of living conformity to the Divine spirit or of merely professed conformity. And I have no belief accordingly that he who is willing to postpone these interests now out of regard to any conventional interests the most sacred, will not find himself just as willing to enact a similar postponement after death and to all eternity.

I do not believe for my own part that God

has one lingering grain of respect or tolerance left for those idle religious fears which haunt the pampered sons of earth with respect to a future life, and which they pay solemn clergymen and dishonest editors of religious newspapers to nurse upon their great lazy knees, now artfully inflating them to the most menacing dimensions, and anon reducing them by their ingenious sophistry to the most pleasing insignificance. We are greatly mistaken in supposing that the life which Christ reveals, God's true life in man, is mere *post-mortem* existence, or has any particular respect to the literal extension of the personal consciousness beyond the grave. The distinctively Christian life is one of spiritual conjunction with all Divine innocence and peace, and thence alone of perfect power or bliss; and mere *post-mortem* possibilities have no logical relevancy to such a state of things. Does any of my readers suppose for example that when the cowardly ruffian who assailed Mr. Sumner on the floor of the United States senate, died, he became any more nearly conjoined with God by that flimsy physical event than he was before? The man's spirit did not die; underwent, so far as we know, no humiliation for the atrocious outrage it enacted; and consequently remained unchanged. It was the mere natural body that died; so leaving the spirit free to project its own future covering, or house itself in a body exactly accordant with itself, with its own cultivated character whatever that might be. To be conjoined with God, to know the bliss of

heaven, means to be spiritually filled with all mercy all gentleness all truth; and one becomes filled with such things, not by any modification of his outward relations, his relations to space and time, but by inward culture, or gradual refinement out of his native dross. And to suppose one in any better circumstances with respect to this end beyond the grave, is, as it seems to me, not only gratuitous but extremely derogatory to God. Because if the other world exhibit a more favorable set of influences with respect to our spiritual progress than this world exhibits, then clearly God might if He had pleased have ordained precisely the same influences here: and not having done so, we should be constrained to say that He had not done the best thing possible for us here: which would be a reflection either upon His love or upon His wisdom, or else upon both.

I have no manner of doubt indeed that the other life is even less mechanical and arbitrary than this; that the law of spiritual freedom is even more absolute there than here: thus that as there may be more exquisite virtue and happiness there, there may also be more exquisite vice and misery. I have no fear therefore that as long as bullies and bruisers are bred by our imperfect society or fellowship, they will not find bigger bullies and more remorseless bruisers on the other side of death to beat their bullying and their bruising out of them; this capital police use justifying the existence of such cattle the while, and redeeming it to a low savor of humanity.

In short I confess to the very greatest satisfaction in believing that God is a perfect man, and that the human quality accordingly, which is freedom or self hood, is so respected by Him in all men, that no one is ever made better by miraculous interference, but only by appeals to his reigning love; *i. e.* by his being allowed to reap in every case the proper fruit of his own actions, and his becoming rationally or freely elevated by such experience.[1]

[1] See Appendix, Note F.

CHAPTER XIV.

But let us get back to our subject.

We have been worshipping God in the religious way long enough; a great deal too long in fact. That He means to be worshipped at length in a far grander way, that is, in the way of LIFE exclusively, which is a way of the exactest spiritual conformity to His spirit, is what is proclaimed, I devoutly believe, by all the dread signs and portents we see around us; signs and portents of political corruption disorganization and death. We are dying politically in order to be resuscitated socially; for the law of all true creation is that it flower out of death, that it take on immortality by incorporating death itself into its substance. We are thus undergoing political decease, in order to our final social resurrection. We are dying to an old outworn temporary organization, to rise and reappear in one which shall never know disease or blight. The life which we are upon the verge of realizing, the life inaugurated by Christ in human nature, means an exact accord and no longer the slightest vestige of discord between the natural and spiritual mind, between the outward and inward man. The precise and total meaning of Christianity, what alone makes it gospel, or qual-

ifies it to avouch God's highest glory, to establish peace on earth, and vindicate God's delight in men (ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκία, Luke ii. 14) is that it affirms the perfect unition of the Divine and human natures in Christ, so that we have henceforth a nearness to God which exalts even personal cleanliness into godliness, and makes mere bodily health a spiritual obligation. We all know how through the dismay of kindred, the disgust of friends, the disdain of the proud, the opprobrium of the vile, the hatred of the devout and honorable, that most feeble and suffering brother steadfastly pursued the bright ideal of a love which is infinite, until at last that love surrendered itself to his immaculate wooing, to his stainless keeping, became unqualifiedly his own, became consubstantiate with his personal consciousness, so that he could say with perfect truth "Henceforth I and my Father are one." The expectation of a righteousness on earth at all commensurate with human hope, would have been utterly fruitless unless some individual subject of our nature, in simple fidelity to the light within him had thus first compelled self-love in his own bosom into such complete subservience to neighborly love, and then compelled neighborly love itself into such complete subservience to universal love, as to make that bosom experience of his react and resound to the uttermost limits of God's spiritual dominion; so that every individual bosom within the range of that dominion, in which these warring loves inhere, must evermore infallibly feel and infalli-

bly reflect the influence of that stupendous reconciliation. For this work, being once done and so done, is done forever and for all men; so that wherever we can imagine in the lowest hell a form of evil duskier than all its fellows, and in the highest heavens a form of good more lustrous than every other form, these two instantly find themselves stripped by that great anguish of their puny intrinsic antagonism, and forever indissolubly blent in a new and Divine manhood instinct with an infinite good.

My son! give me thy heart! is God's sole claim upon His creature. The social man alone, and for the first time in human history, fully meets this claim, because in him alone the heart is dislodged from its long captivity to the head, and so becomes capable at last of bringing forth fruit directly to God, bounteous spiritual fruit filling the earth with peace. What alone makes man the image of God, what exalts the human form to the rightful supremacy of nature, is, that it puts the heart in the first place, the head in the second place, and the hand in the last place. To work out this exquisite hierarchy of the human form: to give the feminine element in life its hard-earned but eternal supremacy of the masculine element: has been the secret inspiration of all past history. Visibly to organize this beautiful and permanent order of human life; to release the suffering down-trodden Eve of human affection from the coarse defiling Adam of the intellect, and exalt her to virgin innocence, or empower her to conceive directly

of the Infinite and bring forth at last that seed of long promise which is yet to bruise the serpent's head: this I repeat has been the one aim of God's majestic Providence on earth; and this aim stands accomplished only in our perfect social manhood; only in that great redemptive work of God's spirit in our nature whereby my reader and I, and whatsoever else is alive in Christendom, are being gradually moulded out of the most depraved moral conditions into the dignity of social beings, beings who have a sympathy and therefore a destiny as wide as the universe of God.

In Christ the ground of our everlasting rejoicing, as I have already said, is, that his natural part was glorified; not merely his spiritual part, as is the case in our ordinary regeneration, but his downright natural body as well. Not his inward spirit alone, but his shrinking cowering outward body also, lent such faultless obedience to every behest of the infinite love in his soul, as eventually to discharge itself of its merely material or inherited contents, and take on living Divine substance instead, so that his flesh as we are told saw no corruption. *A spirit,* he said to his astonished disciples after his resurrection, *hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have: handle me and make sure of the fact.* Now in inspired speech, which is necessarily symbolic, flesh and bones signify the lowest or natural things of the mind, the passions and appetites we derive from nature. And consequently by Christ's alleged union with God even down to

these lowest natural things, is signified that the love which we all owe to ourselves will eventually be cultivated into such harmony with the love we owe our neighbors, and this again become cultivated into such harmony with the love we owe the world or all men, that they will be both alike glorified out of all their intrinsic antagonism — out of all resemblance to their former finite selves — by becoming both alike merged in the unity of the social sentiment, the truly infinite or perfect sentiment of a universal human brotherhood: so that the rational understanding of man, symbolized by the astonished disciples, will thenceforth see Nature herself to be Divinely quickened, and even this corruptible body of ours brought into living glowing conscious unity with God.

It is striking to observe the discrepancy between the face of the New Testament, and the puerile theologies which profess to be illuminated by it. In the New Testament you read of a kingdom of God to be established UPON EARTH; of a Divine operation to be wrought in the sphere of the senses; of a hope which looks for fulfilment to the promised return of Christ to take possession of the kingdoms of the world and reign forever. The only prayer he taught us to address to God, is, that His name might be hallowed, His kingdom come, and His will be done — on earth as in heaven. Look at our theologies, or listen to our preachers thence disciplined, and you will find the hope they set before their followers to consist in a mere evasion

of the gospel promise, being made to attach exclusively to a life beyond the grave. Not one word of God's promised kingdom upon the earth, a kingdom which should be everlasting: but any amount of puny naturalism under the form of angelic coddling and nursing. Not one word of universal man healed, purified, and restored to God in that very point where alone he needed God's help, his nature: but any amount of sentimental nonsense designed to comfort well-to-do worldlings against the nervous fear of death. One would think listening to our orthodox pulpit strains that an incident over which we have no more power than we have over our birth, and which vegetable and animal undergo without a groan or a shudder, has yet been made by God's wisdom the true test of our whimpering manhood, and the only suitable goal of its discipline. In a word we find God's sole work of mercy operated in our very nature, a work of universal redemption alone befitting the infinitude of His love, so completely overlaid by a piddling doctrine of the favoritism He is capable of showing certain fussy individual souls here and there, that Christ's famous question — *nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?* — gets a very loud answer.

I do not know a better reading for anybody who wishes to get his imagination effectually disenchanted of the illusions which are too apt to be cherished on *post-mortem* conditions generally, than the writings of Swedenborg. Swe-

denborg renders indeed a much more positive service to the mind than this; but a very great negative advantage nevertheless derivable from his writings to Philosophy, is the very clear light they shed upon the indestructibleness of human freedom under all circumstances; so that all Divine power is impotent to do a man any permanent good, save in the strictest consonance with its requirements. In all God's dealings with us He regards the interests of our freedom as jealously as a man guards the apple of his eye: because without freedom or selfhood we should be incapable of spiritual conjunction with Him, and so fail of our creation. For this reason it is that His great creative work demands a natural sphere of ultimation, since whatsoever is done in our nature leaves us spiritually unconstrained, or preserves our individual freedom intact. Swedenborg accordingly unmasks what we call "the other world" of its factitious semblances derived from our egotism and superstition, and shows it to be everywhere intensely human, glowing with the same vivid life in kind —only more intense in degree and more orderly in manifestation — as that which now animates our bosoms.

But even in regard to angelic existence, which is the point upon which our readiest superstition hinges, his books exhibit a very detergent efficacy. They have it — at least I infer as much from their effect on me — as their surest incidental or negative result, to dissipate that vague prestige of superiority which we are wont to attrib-

ute to the angel over man, and to assert for the latter the clear supremacy of creation. In reading Swedenborg I feel myself completely disabused of the charm which angelic existence has always exerted upon my imagination, simply because I can in no way reconcile myself to that fixed shadow of infernality which he honestly declares and proves to be inseparable from it. According to Swedenborg, and what is more than a myriad Swedenborgs, according to common sense, hell is the perpetual shadow of heaven, its logical background without which heaven could not appear as heaven. No angel, as he says, but stands foot to foot with some devil; no society of angels but stands foot to foot with some society of devils. What an odious glimpse of creation this, if this were all! What an infirm exhibition of Divine power, if the angel were its final manifestation; or if it consisted only in eternally antagonizing spirit with flesh! But no! blessed be God! He is capable of conferring a positive righteousness upon His creature, a righteousness which does not stand in the mere contrast and elimination of evil. In a word He is able to create MAN in whom evil spontaneously subjects itself to good, and in whom accordingly life shines forth quite infinitely as being wholly undimmed by the ghastly and revolting oppugnancy of death.

The angel according to Swedenborg is formed by the elimination or casting out of the devil. Thus the devil stands for so much waste human force as the angel fails to realize in the process

of his conjunction with God. He expresses the angel's infirm natural side; all that natural infirmity which the latter sheds or separates from himself in the process of his regeneration. He is merely the gross earthly grub or grovelling caterpillar, of which the angel is the emancipated soaring butterfly. Hence the more angels the more devils; so that if there were not some higher manifestation of the Divine power possible than takes place in the angel, the universe of nature would be a perpetual prey to the rivalry of these unreconciled forces.

But there is a higher manifestation possible, an infinitely higher one, which is the Lord, or Divine NATURAL man. In him this waste human force which the angel rejects, and which accordingly constitutes the devil, is all taken up, and becomes the guarantee of an endless Divine glorification on earth infinitely transcending everything known in heaven. This is the great *arcanum* which underlies the truth of Christ's resurrection and ascension, or the glorification of his natural body down to its flesh and bones. *Handle me and see*, he said to his stupefied disciples who fancied that they saw a spirit: *a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.* Unlike the mere good man or angel he excluded no affection which inflowed to him either from the universal heaven or the universal hell. On the contrary he received all and converted all into a worthy triumph of the Divine Love, by turning the evil affections into the spontaneous subjection of the good affections, or making hell

itself the willing and cordial servitor of heaven: so that the very flesh and bones which he had derived from his mother, and which ordinary men leave in the grave, that base flesh and bones which connected him in sympathy with the entire finite realm of being angelic and diabolic, became really or spiritually HIS OWN, became so transformed by the purifying fires of his soul into the image of his inmost Divine and infinite innocence, as to avouch themselves at length its every way adequate instrument, its befitting and inseparable tabernacle to eternity.

The priceless value of the Christian truth is, that it thus reveals God to us as a glorified NATURAL man, and consequently makes any amount of hope for this despised and degraded natural body of ours, for its growth in all health and beauty and dazzling innocence not only possible, but a strict religious delight and obligation. Can any one really be so foolish as to suppose that God can worthily provide for the soul, without first providing for that matchless tabernacle in which it resides: that He can insure us an endless spiritual or private individual development, without first freeing our natural or common life from those disorders which have hitherto borne it down to the earth? Well, this is the precise marvel wrapped up in the truth of Christ's resurrection from death in his natural body; namely: the reduction of HUMAN NATURE ITSELF to order, so that our hitherto neglected body shall become the only visible and acknowledged temple of God, lustrous with all inward

vigor and outward beauty, the shrine of every chaste and generous and ennobling offering.

However much then we may esteem the angel, and aspire to emulate him in spiritual things, we are bound also by our superior reverence for the angel's Lord, not to omit the devil either from our most hopeful regard. The devil has hitherto had the most niggardly appreciation at our hands, because in our ignorance of God's stupendous designs of mercy on earth, or of His creative achievements in human nature, we have supposed the devil to be an utter outcast of His providence, a purely irrational quantity; nor ever dreamed that it lay within the purpose and resources of the Divine Love to bind him to its own perfect allegiance. Yet so it is nevertheless. He has been from the beginning our only heaven-appointed churchman and statesman, the very man of men for doing all that showy work of the world, namely persuading, preaching, cajoling, governing, which is requisite to be done, and which is fitly paid by the honors and emoluments of the world. In our ignorant contempt of the devil we have insisted upon making the angel do this incongruous work; never suspecting that we were thus doing our best to promote his and our joint and equal discontent. The angel is the worst possible ecclesiastic or politician, because being of all things a man of an internal quality, public life is sure to disgust him: and disgust is a poor preparation for duty. No man of truly angelic possibilities is ever greatly up to the demands of the actual life. If

such a man manages to avoid stealing, or doing other palpable mischief, it is as much as we may reasonably ask of him. But put him in a post of eminence or of large responsibility, and he will be sure to go on blundering at such a rate, and putting things to such confusion by his most unseasonable simplicity and good nature, by his most unreasonable confidence in exactly the least deserving and most designing persons, that you are forced erelong to send to Wall Street for some remorseless financier to straighten his accounts, and save the world from bankruptcy.

The devil is the born prince of this world, and a capital one he is, if we would let the Divine Wisdom have its way with him, which is not to ignore him, as our foolish sentimentalists prescribe, but to utilize him to the utmost: which He does by giving him the best places in the world, all the delights, all the honors and rewards of sense, that so he may put forth his marvellous fecundity of invention and production to deserve and secure them. This is what the Divine Providence has always sought to compass from the beginning, namely: to manumit the devil, or bind him by his own lusts exclusively, which are the love of self and the love of the world, to the joyous eternal allegiance of man. We, sage philosophers that we are, have done our futile best to hinder the Divine ways by always thrusting the most incongruous and incompetent people into public affairs; and have consequently got the whole theory of administration so sophisticated, as

greatly to embarrass the right incumbent when he does arrive, and set him half the time talking the most irrelevant piety, instead of doing the sharp and satisfactory work which he is all the while providentially itching to do. What sort of a pope would Fenelon have made? And how would political interests thrive with the apostle John at the head of affairs? I confess for my part I would bestow my vote in preference upon General Jackson or Louis Napoleon any day, simply because they are as I presume very inferior men spiritually, and therefore incomparably better qualified for ruling other men, which is spiritually the lowest or least human of vocations.[1]

Let not my reader misconceive me. I have not the slightest idea of hell as a transitory implication of human destiny, as an exhausted element of human progress. On the contrary I conceive that the vital needs of human freedom exact its eternal perpetuity. I admit, nay I insist, that the devil is fast becoming and will one day be a perfect gentleman; that he will wholly unlearn his nasty tricks of vice and crime,

[1] I wish very much by the way that our Unitarian and Universalist philosophers would take a look in this direction, and give up their sentimental shrieking at the devil regarded as a vital element of human consciousness. Because in that case our insane and inane Transcendentalism, against which the prevalent so-called Spiritualism is a maudlin protest and reaction, would fail of its backbone, and human thought would again recover its tonic quality, and we should all get deliverance from that puerile Pantheistic gabble which is fast strangling the higher faculties of the mind under the grasp of an all-devouring Imagination, and in comparison with which as it seems to me unmitigated Atheism would be manly sincere and evangelical.

and become a model of sound morality, infusing an unwonted energy into the police department, and inflating public worship with an unprecedented pomp and magnificence. Otherwise of course I could not imagine why our Lord and Saviour with a full knowledge of the character and tendencies of Judas Iscariot yet chose him into the number of the sacred twelve, and intrusted him with the provision of his and their material welfare. But the gentleman is infinitely short of the MAN; and however gentlemanly the devil will infallibly grow, there he will stop; and leave the sacred heights of manhood unattempted.

The gentleman is the apotheosis or glorified form of the devil; while man is the apotheosis or glorified form of the angel: the former obeying a purely natural inspiration, the latter a purely spiritual one. The gentleman always acts with the most studious and unfaltering courtesy, with a faultless regard to what is conventionally due to others; herein indeed very often putting the more richly but less showily endowed man to the blush. But his action obeys a purely natural impulse, having no higher spring than that sentiment of fellowship which relates him to his kind, and forbids him under penalty of forfeiting his self-respect, or wounding his self-love, to do anything even discourteous, much more anything injurious, to his neighbor. The man on the other hand is very little solicitous about the points of good-breeding which interest the gentleman; unless indeed you can con-

ceive the two characters amicably blent in the same individuality. I cannot myself do this. It seems to me that the only way they can ever amicably combine in the same bosom, is upon the somewhat Hibernian condition of the one being strictly subjected to the needs of the other. The veritable man, the man who obeys a purely spiritual or inward inspiration, cannot be made to occupy himself with his merely outward obligations of any sort, much less with the obligations of pure courtesy and good-manners. If he is born into a good heritage in this respect, if courtesy and good manners have somewhere got into his blood, very well: he will mechanically or instinctively reproduce them: but no thanks to him for the boon. In all social respects he is the undoubted inferior of the gentleman, and cannot compete for his prizes even if he would. It is only in inward or spiritual regards that he takes precedence; not in his action, but only in the superior depth and purity of the source from which the action proceeds.

CHAPTER XV.

I HOPE I shall by this time have succeeded in satisfying the reader, that my criticism of the church is well-founded, and that Philosophy feels no interest in reinstating religion as a truth of doctrine, but only in reproducing it as a life. Let us now prepare accordingly to dismiss the negative portion of our task, and turn to the much more agreeable aspect it presents on its constructive side.

One thing clearly results from the survey we have been making of the religious instinct; and this is, that religion has had but one legitimate spiritual aim, namely: the softening of the self-hood or *proprium* which man derives from nature; the depletion of his natural pride and self-seeking in order to his subsequent spiritual impletion with all Divine gentleness peace and innocence. The total function of religion wherever it has exhibited the least spiritual efficacy, *i. e.* operated any modification of the life of its subject, appears to have consisted in signalizing to his consciousness a certain evil in his natural make or inheritance, which is to be overcome before he can attain to a conscious perfect conjunction with God.

Now the reader has every right to demand of

me, why religion necessarily involves this purgatorial element: why it is, in other words, that every religion which abjures a sentimental basis, or claims to be called natural in opposition to artificial, instinctual in contradistinction to voluntary, proceeds upon sacrifice; figuratively suspends the purification of the worshipper's flesh upon "the shedding of blood"?

I can only answer this question worthily by explicating in the clearest possible manner the Origin of Nature; by showing that Nature is a rigid involution or implication of man's spiritual destiny, and hence has neither the slightest power nor pretension beyond what our ignorance and superstition give it, to limit that destiny, but only to promote its eternal evolution and explication. We now enjoy a better knowledge of spiritual laws, which are the true laws of creation, than our predecessors enjoyed. Spiritual laws which are the laws of our true individuality, as natural laws are those of our phenomenal identity, are better understood than they were a century since, and it is upon these alone that I shall rely for the clearing up of my reader's doubts. I shall endeavor to show him that the interests of our spiritual formation in the Divine image exact as a basis our natural creation, and that whereas the folly of the past has consisted in ignoring this order, to the extent of making flesh dominate spirit, or substance form; the wisdom of the future will consist in scrupulously acknowledging it, and holding nature consequently, or the sphere of our common life, to

the strictest, nay, to the unlimited subserviency of our private or spiritual aspirations.

Viewing human history in the light which Revelation sheds upon it, its whole meaning may be thus formulated: a demonstration by God's providence of our native incapacity to act honestly from any other motive than interest; and hence of the necessity we are all alike under of a spiritual extrication or redemption from the control of our nature, before we can bring forth the least ripe fruit of manly or disinterested action. Our moral experience furnishes of course the indispensable theatre of this Divine demonstration or achievement; because nature culminates in morality, comes to a head in man; so that God is able to deal with it as a rational quantity only in the person of its representatives. But our moral experience is not of the slightest worth save as subserving this grand historic demonstration. It becomes a downright unqualified nuisance indeed the moment it ceases to subserve it, the moment it claims a direct Divine sanctity.

It is her failure to discern this truth as we have seen which has turned the technical church into such a refuge of spiritual imbecility; which has converted professional religion into such a citadel of spiritual uncleanness. The church habitually misconceives the intrinsic subserviency of morality to the evolution of man's spiritual destiny on earth; and by adroitly flattering his instinct of self-righteousness, or teaching him that his moral force is the direct measure of

God's goodness and power towards him, succeeds in indefinitely postponing the advent of a scientific society among men, and consequently in balking all that rich promise of spontaneous or productive activity which is based upon such advent. No doubt she outwardly professes a faith in the Incarnation. No doubt as against heretics she maintains that Christ did veritably constitute the entire spiritual substance of that typical or prophetic righteousness, which was Divinely guaranteed to human hope in the Jewish ritual; inasmuch as he putatively reconciled the human nature to the Divine in himself. But while thus recognizing the Divine Incarnation in words, she yet in spirit and truth most profligately profanes and defeats it, by ascribing to Christ that purely finite individuality which belonged to him in the flesh, and so denying him the spiritual infinitude which was the only meaning of his glorification, and which stamped him thenceforward the sole Divine life of all on earth that has life. She thus consistently keeps us in a purely personal relation to Christ instead of a purely spiritual one, or exalts the moral sentiment, the sentiment of our individual worth in God's sight to a primary place in our regard, while she depresses the social sentiment to a wholly secondary place: so giving our base instinctual egotism that Divine sanction which is due only to our cultivated unity or fraternity. Having no faintest conception of our inward and indissoluble nearness to God; never so much as dreaming that He every moment is

our sole true life, while we ourselves are but the semblance of that life: the church allows us ignorantly to grovel in the conviction that we are each of us life in ourselves — not mere circumferential phenomenal forms of life — but real substantial centres of life to ourselves, just as God is to himself. And we on our side are not slow to improve the lesson, or illustrate its practical value, by proudly insisting upon being treated by God not as affectionate children to whom everything is a boon, but as emancipated self-complacent Pharisees to whom nothing comes acceptably which does not come of merit.

The theologian and philosopher so-called have done little hitherto but confirm us in these besotted natural prepossessions. In fact these men above all others foster the pride of moralism in the race, and so confirm its spiritual death, by systematically confounding seeming with being or making subjective fact the measure of objective truth. Of course if I am objectively or to God's regard what I am subjectively or to my own consciousness, there can be no hope for me; because in that case I must either deem myself a saint possessing a good conscience towards God, and so put myself at an infinite inward distance from Him; or else deem myself a sinner possessing an evil conscience, and so put myself at an infinite outward remove from Him. These men accept without any misgiving this fundamental fallacy of sense, that we are our own substantial life, not mere

forms or subjects of an infinite life: hence that we are properly separable before God into virtuous and vicious, celestial and infernal beings, who are respectively most worthy of his smile and frown. And a philosophy which admits or tolerates this primary misconception, is vicious from top to bottom. For the sole legitimate pretension of any philosophy, is, not to intensify the discord which both sense and reason, both faith and science, allege between infinite and finite, between absolute and relative; but forever to reconcile them in a unity so perfect that neither will care thenceforth to know how much belongs to the one element, or how much to the other.

The distinction of religious and profane among men, or of the church and the world, is of no account in itself, but only as symbolizing a great formative or redemptive work operated by God within the limits of our very nature, within the conditions of the natural conscience. The common sentiment in the church[1] implies that saint and sinner are two most distinct persons impossible to be blent in the same bosom, one emerging to the Divine regard and his own consciousness, only as the other immerses. This is a purely sensual look at things; for the celestial quality of the human

[1] And for that matter in the world: for these two things run together at such a rate, the church having become so worldly and the world so churchy, that it is a nice point to discriminate them. The church is wholly worldly as to her substantial *animus*; the world wholly religious as to its formal pretences or professions. Thus it is no matter whether you say the one or the other.

bosom is determined in every case by the genuine unaffected acknowledgment its occupant makes of himself as a sinner; and its infernal quality by the genuine unaffected relish he enjoys of himself as a righteous person. There is but One life in the universe; and consequently all the contrasts of our experience, both moral and physical, all the diversities not merely of good and evil among men but also of pleasure and pain, together with all the varieties of either, owe their existence exclusively to the relation we practically sustain to that great Life, whether a positive relation or a negative one. For if there be but One life from which every man is alike enlivened, that of the infinite Creator and Redeemer, then the unity of the creature, which means the exact and unswerving equality of each with every other, is not only a philosophic truth to which all things in heaven are conformed, but must become also a scientific truth or truth of the senses, to which all things on earth will eventually bow. And history is merely the working out of this great purpose in humanity; the perfect spiritual authentication of that great literal revelation of His perfection which God makes in the Christ, glorifying our very nature into eternal union with Himself. For while our historic experience leaves no further doubt upon the origin of conscience, making it to hinge upon the unequivocal duality of relation we are under to God and our neighbor, or giving it a twofold aspect, one towards the infinite another towards

the finite: it clearly teaches us also that these two aspects of conscience are bound perfectly to harmonize; that we cannot be favorably related to the Divine spirit for example save in so far as we are in fraternal relation to our neighbor; and bids us look for this great result exclusively to that majestic spiritual Providence which coordinates self-love with brotherly love, and both with universal love, in the unseen heart of the race, by eventually bringing forth a perfect society or fellowship of men upon earth.

But let us proceed to justify all this by a systematic investigation of what is involved, philosophically, in the idea of creation.

It is obvious even to a superficial regard that creation means, on the part of the creator, the giving being or substance to what is intrinsically void of being or substance, to what in itself or subjectively is void of life.

And implying thus much on the part of the creator, it is almost equally obvious that the term cannot help implying, on the part of the creature, form without substance, seeming without being, phenomenality without any corresponding reality. Because if the creature should involve his own substance as well as his own form, he would be uncreated: *i. e.* would repugn that intrinsic destitution of being or substance which is implied in his creation, or his deriving being from another than himself. In order to the veracity of creation then, the creature must be a purely phenomenal existence, a purely subjective form: in other words his sub-

jectivity must alienate its own proper objectivity, or refer it to another than himself; so confessing itself a merely conscious or finite existence.

Accordingly we may define creation generally as the giving invisible inward being or substance to what in-itself is a pure form or appearance of being.

Does the term imply anything definite, in respect to the nature of the life or being thus communicated by the creator to the creature?

No. It merely implies that the life or being, thus communicated, will be proportionate in every case to the power that gives. The creator can only give the life or being which he himself is. If he be himself a finite imperfect being, he can only impart a similar being to his creature. If on the other hand he be an infinite or perfect being, he will be sure to impart a similar infinitude or perfection to his creatures. Being himself infinite and eternal; or possessing a life wholly above the limitations of space and the mutations of time, that is to say, a strictly spiritual life; the being or life which he gives his creature cannot help turning out strictly proportionate, *i. e.* cannot help being itself spiritual. In short: if the creator in question be a man, then inasmuch as his creature can only reflect his proper finiteness or imperfection, it will enjoy a wholly finite or imperfect existence. If on the other hand the creator in question be God, then creation (as meaning the alienation of His own infinite being, of His own perfect

life, or the communication of it to another than Himself;) of course interprets itself into a rigid equation of infinite and finite: *i. e.* announces itself, on God's part, as the giving infinitude or perfection to what is essentially finite or imperfect, simply by means of the creature, on his part, becoming aware of his essential finiteness, or attaining to the consciousness of his intrinsic imperfection, of his proper want or destitution.

We have now got a sufficiently comprehensive notion of what is meant by creation; and this being the case, two observations of the deepest philosophic interest will at once force themselves upon the reader's attention.

I. The first observation (which elucidates the genesis of consciousness) is as follows: Inasmuch as it is logically implied in all creation that the thing created have an intrinsic dearth of life or destitution of being, which alone qualifies it for the reception of such life or being, so consequently this logical implication exacts the creature's finite embodiment, his consciousness of want, of limitation, of imperfection, as its own corresponding explication. For finite existence, which is limitation in space and time, alone expresses that intrinsic dearth of life which characterizes the creature, and alone supplies therefore that unchangeable basis of identity, upon which his individuality is suspended. Obviously unless the creature's intrinsic destitution become phenomenally organized to his own perception, he will never attain to veracious consciousness, and will consequently fail of that

discrimination from his creator, on which the entire truth of his creation is grounded. What the creature is in-himself or essentially, must become phenomenally organized to his own experience, in order to his having any consciousness, or before he can claim that projection from his creator which makes existence or anything else predicable of him. And finite existence, existence in time and space, alone expresses what the creature is in-himself or essentially, namely: a form of universal destitution and hence of dependence upon what is not himself.

For example: we say the sculptor creates the statue, or gives it being. But manifestly it is implied in this observation that marble or some other material exist to embody the statue, or give it subjective constitution. Otherwise it would never get that objective projection from its creator's brain which makes it a true creation, and not a mere imagination. The sculptor cannot even conceive the statue without an implication of the purely subjective or constitutional material by means of which he is to give it visible existence: much less of course could he execute it without such implication. It is often loosely said that the statue exists in the sculptor's brain, or in idea, before it exists in marble. No doubt it exists potentially in the sculptor's brain, just as the child exists potentially in the loins of its father. But this potency plainly becomes converted into actuality only by the intervention of the mar-

ble in the one case, and of the mother in the other.

Bodily existence, then, phenomenal subjectivity, finite consciousness, on the part of the creature, is philosophically implied or presupposed in the being which is given it by the creator: just as the materials of a house are implied or presupposed in the house itself. A house without any constitutional substance to embody it, or give it phenomenal and subjective identity with other houses, would lack all real individuality or objective distinction from other houses; *i. e.* would be no house: for subjective identity or community is the necessary basis of all objective diversity or individuality. Precisely so an unembodied creature of God — a creature without existence in space and time — would be destitute both of sense and reason; would be unconscious and non-existent; because it would lack that fundamental subjective identity with other existence which is the sole ground of its real or objective discrimination.

So much for the first observation.

II. The second observation (which is completely fatal to Kant's conception of the reality of things as pertaining to the things in-themselves) is as follows: If thus much be implied in the creation of anything, namely, that the thing exist in finite phenomenal form in order to give it consoious identity, or projection from its creative source: then clearly anything more than this becomes rigidly excluded. Because if in order to a thing's being created or truly

existing, the thing should claim as Kant alleges not phenomenal but noumenal existence, not finite but infinite substance: in other words, if the thing should possess in-itself not subjective or phenomenal identity with all other things, but objective or infinite distinction from all other things, it must of course exclude all other things, and avouch itself essentially underived or uncreated. In other words still: if, as Kant alleges, a thing requires, in order truly to be, to possess in-itself infinitude or absoluteness, then of course everything that truly is derides the imputation of creation; since what is in-itself infinite and absolute, is uncreated; is, in fact, God.

Now what is the philosophic moral of these two observations? It is that the sole realm of reality for man is the realm of consciousness; that we have absolutely no life or being in ourselves which is not based primarily upon that natural community or identity which we share with all other creatures. In other words finite or phenomenal being is essential to the creature, is what gives him identity to his own consciousness, or separates him from the creator: so that to suppose him possessing any being or life in-himself and apart from his kind, is to suppose him unconscious, non-existent, dead. The regulative consideration on all this topic is, that creation is a strictly subjective work of God, a work flowing from the very infinitude of His love, or His incapacity to love Himself, and hence demanding an exclusively foreign or

external objectivity. The work consists rigidly in His giving life or being — *i. e.* inasmuch as He is Himself life or being, in His giving Himself — to what is not Himself, to what is indeed directly antagonistic to Himself. This being the case, the question at once arises: How in this state of things is it possible for the creature himself to attain to valid selfhood, to a true subjectivity, to a veracious consciousness? If by the strict necessity of the case the work of creation be a purely subjective proceeding on God's part, what shall hinder His subjectivity swallowing up or dominating that of the creature? Where will you fix the line of demarcation which shall preserve the creature from confounding himself with the creator, which shall say here ends the creator, here begins the creature? How in short shall the creature secure that necessary projection from his creative source, which alone makes creation an actual reality, and saves it from the obscene jaws of Pantheism?

You see at a glance that the difficulty here alleged is fatal, if you regard the created subjectivity as possessing in-itself any objectivity: if you regard the creature as possessing in-himself anything but a conscious life or reality. But if on the other hand the creature be purely phenomenal; if he have no existence out of consciousness; if he be a mere subjective form or appearance to himself, without any corresponding objective substance or reality: then the difficulty at once vanishes, because there is noth-

ing here alleged to conflict with the creative subjectivity. So long as the creature's existence is confined to the realm of consciousness, the finite or phenomenal realm, it does not impinge of course upon the realm of being, or of that infinite and absolute reality which is God. It may indeed expand and expatiate in this field to any extent, or assert itself with ever augmenting confidence and boldness, and yet incur no other risk than that of an ever increasing spiritual remoteness from God.

This brief analysis of what is implied in the general idea of creation, will enable the reader to estimate the gross treachery to Philosophy, considered as the science of being, which is involved in Kant's atrocious figment of noumenal existence. Kant feigns a world of unknown substance with no other end than to invalidate human knowledge, and so undermine human belief in that known Divine substance to which unsophisticated minds universally ascribe creation. He postulates an essentially incognizable and therefore dishonest world as the only real one, in order that that which is essentially cognizable and therefore honest may be forced to confess itself a cheat. He abstracts reality from things themselves, the only things that ever have existed or ever can exist, in order to bestow it upon a set of thankless ghosts which he calls "things-in-themselves," but which never have existed and never can exist. What Kant and Sir William Hamilton call "real" things, "noumenal" things, or "things-in-themselves," are in

truth things which involve their own substance, thus which are self-existent or infinite and hence uncreated. It would be sheerly idle then to predicate creatureship of "real" or "noumenal" things, because in the first place we can never know whether or not they so much as exist; and in the second place if they do exist they will be sure to exclude creation: since created things never involve their own substance or selfhood, but on the contrary evolve it by diligently acknowledging what is not themselves.

"Real" existence being thus summarily disposed of on the Kantian hypothesis, how fares it in turn with phenomenal existence? Has the phenomenon any surer title to creation than the noumenon? If we abandon "real" existence to Kant as uncreated, shall we not, *à fortiori* indeed, be obliged to abandon phenomenal existence to the same ruthless negation? Unquestionably. For if existence be real only in so far as it involves its own substance, or is infinite, then clearly phenomenal existence in confessing itself finite, proclaims itself unreal; and it would be folly to allege creation of what is unreal. In order that a thing should confess itself created, it must exist either consciously to itself or visibly to others; *i. e.* must exhibit subjective identity with other existence. But what Kant calls phenomenal existence is destitute even of this subjective reality, repugns all manner of identity whether that of consciousness to itself or visibility to others, and hence of course cannot be

created. The phenomenon according to Kant is what does not exist in-itself or subjectively, but only in relation to some extraneous intelligence, or objectively. The noumenon on the other hand is what does exist in-itself or subjectively, and therefore has no relation to any outlying intelligence, consequently is destitute of objective truth. Thus the defect of "real" existence in Kant's view is, that it is objectively unrelated or non-existent, and hence declines "the soft impeachment" of creation; while that of phenomenal existence is, that it is subjectively unrelated or non-existent, and hence makes that impeachment sheerly ludicrous. In fine "real" existence has no need to be created, because it exists absolutely and amply "in-itself." And phenomenal existence has no capacity to be created, because it does not exist in-itself. Poor creation accordingly is left shivering for a customer; perishes miserably between one set of subjects who are too rich to need its services, and another set who are too poor to purchase them: and this mousing owl of science has been fluttering and 'fooling all our intellectual dove-cotes ever since, as the lordly eagle of Philosophy!

Or to express the result more succinctly. "Real" things, considered as involving their own substance, do not exist, being prevented doing so by their very reality. And phenomenal things, being by this definition unreal, are only the more forcibly forbidden to exist by their own unreality. For if we cannot admit "real" things to exist, it would be highly indecorous to admit "unreal"

ones to that distinction; unless indeed we wish to prove creation itself a sham. In either case alike then we get rid of existence, and hence of creation, as an "imbecility" of the uncultivated understanding; and become qualified at last with Sir William Hamilton to turn Philosophy herself as the voucher of creation, into a snivelling idiot whining over "doubt as the beginning and end of knowledge."

CHAPTER XVI.

The least attention to the foregoing criticism will show, that Kant's philosophic weakness lay in his habitually confounding that which constitutes a thing or gives it identity, with that which creates it or gives it individuality. He invariably confounded the subjective constitution of existence, or what gives it phenomenal consciousness, with its objective reality, or what gives it spiritual and unconscious being. Surely my body, though it constitute me to my own perception, though it give me identity or render me conscious, is not what creates me, or gives me absolute individuality, that is, being irrespective of my consciousness. A neutral salt in order to its own identity constitutionally involves an acid and a base. But he would be a sorry philosopher, though he bore the renowned name of Sir William Hamilton, who should thereupon allege that the acid and the alkali not merely constituted the salt, *i. e.* gave it body, or material identity with all other things, but also created it, *i. e.* gave it soul, or spiritual diversity from all other things. What gives the salt visible body or phenomenal identity with all other things, so rendering it appreciable to our science, is the acid and alkali involved in

its physical constitution. But what gives the salt invisible soul or absolute individuality, forever differencing it from all other things, is exclusively the power which it exerts over other existence, notably the power of neutralizing its own constitutional elements, and exalting them to issues to which in themselves they would be wholly incompetent. In like manner precisely what constitutes me to my own intelligence, or gives me conscious identity, is not merely totally distinct from, but is totally opposite and subordinate to, what creates me or gives me individuality, *i. e.* being irrespective of my consciousness. Nature finites or fixes me, that is, gives me bodily identity or consciousness. God alone in-finites or unfixes me, by giving me spiritual individuality or unconscious being. In a word: whatsoever falls within the realm of consciousness, or is embraced within the sphere of our subjectivity, possesses a merely constitutional force, and denies itself any creative significance. Its total virtue lies in giving us subjective or conscious identity with all other existence, and to that extent of course in denying us objective diversity or individuality.

Kant seems never to have suspected the possibility of this discrimination. He thought that the reality of things was subjective as well as their phenomenality; that the constitution of things or what gave them body, was also what created them or gave them soul; that their natural identity was one with their spiritual individuality; that the subject indeed involved its own

object, having power to turn itself outside-in and inside-out at pleasure. He conceives that substance or life is created as well as form or appearance; hence that no visible phenomenon exists which is not haunted by its invisible noumenon sapping its existence, deriding its veracity, turning its life into a mockery and delusion. But in this judgment Kant only echoes the vulgarest of prejudices: exalts that prejudice indeed into the topmost inspiration of Philosophy. Every one naturally supposes (and learns otherwise only by virtue of a sheer intellectual culture, giving him life out of death, light out of darkness) that whatsoever exists is its own distinct substance as well as its own distinct form: its own finite soul as well as its own finite body: thus that there are as many distinct (though to us invisible) substances, as many finite souls, in the universe, as there are distinct finite forms or bodies: so conceiving of creation as presenting to God's mind the same substantial divisibility, the same inward finiteness and relativity, which our own limited consciousness confers upon it.

This is why the popular theology, which is the formal application of sensuous prejudice to the highest themes, interprets creation not as an honest hearty function of the Divine subjectivity really producing life out of death, good out of evil, but as an act of mere ostentatious or brute omnipotence on God's part, an act of pure magic or sleight of hand, discharging us of all rational or reflective admiration towards Him, and bringing us into the base servile attitude of

interested hope or fear. And this again teaches us why the scientific reason in man, which proceeds upon the observation of a strict relationship amongst all finite things, finds itself at eternal loggerheads with religion. For if the differences which I with my finite intelligence discern between Brown Jones and Robinson, go on *ad infinitum*, or find themselves authenticated by the Divine intelligence equally, it will be idle to seek out that common starting point or basis of identity which science declares they all have: since their contrariety is objective as well as subjective, substantial as well as formal; a fact of being no less than of seeming; an infinite fact no less than a finite one; absolute no less than relative. Brown Jones and Robinson are not merely disunited streams; they claim also a disunited origin or source; disavow natural community or identity as well as spiritual unity or individuality; and hence make science impossible and Philosophy absurd.[1]

Idealism, which is the pretension of an ideal or noumenal world to constitute the basis of the actual or phenomenal world, to give it real substance or selfhood, has been the disease of Philosophy from Plato down to Hegel, who makes God himself derive existence from the Idea, or

[1] Hegel's Idealism is an attempt to rescue science from Kant's destructive clutch, by identifying being and thought. It is a clever dodge of the serious difficulties engendered by the fundamental misconception of Natural Theology, which confounds mere natural identity with spiritual individuality: but it is clearly only a dodge, for the misconception is left untouched, is indeed authenticated to the extent of organizing a remorseless Pantheism.

confess Himself contingent upon the contrariety of being and not being. This alone is what has given Philosophy that cramp in the intestines which has forbidden her hitherto for one moment to stand upright or put a foot forward; and which now at last under the auspices of German and Scotch doctors, drives her to unprincipled and even jaunty suicide. She has been feeding upon wind, and her condition is one of chronic indigestion and atrophy. She believes in ghosts in short, which is the last gasp of intellectual imbecility; the ghost of a substance without any form, of a reality without any phenomenality, of a soul without any body: and her poor old eyes accordingly are bleared for lack of vision, and her poor old jaws agape for very emptiness. She has been incessantly haunted by this flatulent abstraction of a substantial world apart from the phenomenal one, of a soul in things utterly incommensurate with their body. And consequently instead of regarding the senses as a solid floor of knowledge whereupon to erect any aspiring edifice of belief however lofty, she has altogether rejected them as absolutely misleading and good-for-nothing, and so allowed the whole majestic heavens of our faith to fall through.

Swedenborg extinguishes this shallow sciolism by solidly vindicating the philosophic basis of creation. While these renowned pilots of Philosophy, by systematically ignoring the stars, or refusing to consult the light of Revelation, have managed to wreck the priceless bark they

assumed to bring to port, and spill its jewelled freight into the sea, he has opened an endless pathway to her by demonstrating that the sole real existence — the only possible ground of consciousness — for the creature *quâ* a creature, is phenomenal, thus scourging the conception of noumenal existence forever out of sight. He establishes beyond the possibility of rational cavil, that the pretension of noumenal existence on the part of a creature, *i. e.* the pretension to possess existence in-himself, is absurd or contradictory; and so turns Philosophy from a suicidal chase of phantoms, into a living and loving recognition of the Infinite within the very bosom of the finite, of the Absolute within the very lap of the relative. He exhausts the philosophic realm of its ontological mummery, by proving phenomenal or finite existence to be the only existence possible to a creature; by proving in other words that the creature simply because he is a creature, cannot have in-himself anything but a conscious, that is, subjective or phenomenal being. He must have as much as this, must have at least a subjective or phenomenal consciousness, in order to his realizing the objective being he has in God. He can have no more than this, under penalty manifestly of excluding the Divine communication. This vindication of our natural life or selfhood as the fixed basis and anchorage of our subsequent spiritual evolution; this positing of our natural identity as the sole conceivable ground of our subsequent unlimited spiritual expansion: con-

stitutes Swedenborg's transcendent claim upon philosophic consideration; the greatest service in my opinion ever rendered to Philosophy since the dawn of human intelligence. For by this one service he has put the veracity of our knowledge upon an inexpugnable basis, and thereby forever authenticated every tenderest and most filial hope and aspiration of the soul towards God. His doctrine on this subject is entitled to the reader's profoundest acceptance. It constitutes the actual break of day to every intelligence palsied by the darkness of Philosophy; the cheerful cockcrow whose inspiring note disperses every ghastly phantom of that imbecile administration. And I should be forever reconciled to my own poverty of wit, if it would only permit me to convey to the reader's understanding any portion of the solid peace and recreation, any portion of the generous "board and lodging" which, in a philosophic sense, the commanding truth in question habitually yields to mine.

But before proceeding systematically to vindicate Swedenborg's immortal services to Philosophy, I should like on every account clearly to establish to the reader's apprehension the delinquency of our existing Philosophy to her own aims. After that we shall be better able to estimate the help Swedenborg brings us.

Incontestably the least exceptionable witness we can summon in all things relating to the past or present status of our recognized Philosophy, is Sir William Hamilton: and he testifies by

her inspiration that we are incapable of arriving at any real knowledge of truth natural or truth revealed.

"Philosophy" he maintains, "if viewed as more than a science of the conditioned is impossible. We can never in our highest generalizations rise above the finite; our knowledge whether of mind or matter can be nothing more than a knowledge of the relative manifestations of an existence which in itself it is our highest wisdom to recognize as beyond the reach of Philosophy."[1] "True therefore are the declarations of a pious Philosophy: a God understood would be no God at all; to think that God is as we can think Him to be, is blasphemy. The last and highest consecration of all true religion must be an altar: to the unknown and unknowable God."[2]

This darkens even the darkness of Paganism which inscribed the first adjective, or declared God unknown, but had not the intolerable presumption to add the second, and declare Him also unknowable.

"The Infinite and Absolute are only the names of two counter imbecilities of the human mind, transmuted into properties of the nature of things; of two subjective negations transmuted into objective affirmations."[3]

Surely this is looking the enemy very full in the face. But Sir William's accomplished dis-

1 *Discussions*, page 15.
2 Ibidem.
3 Ibidem, page 21, *note*. See also the *Lectures on Metaphysics*, Lectures 38 and 39.

ciple and literary executor manifests at least an equal pluck. In a preface to the third edition of his Bampton Lectures, Mr. Mansel in combating the objection that by denying us any true knowledge of the infinite he destroys Revelation, says: "The objection would be pertinent if I had ever maintained that Revelation is or can be a direct manifestation of the infinite nature of God. But I have constantly maintained the very reverse."

The only conceivable reverse of a direct manifestation of God's infinite nature is a direct manifestation of His finite nature. Accordingly Mr. Mansel proceeds: "In Revelation as in Natural Religion, God is represented under finite conceptions adapted to finite minds." Now not to pause upon the left-handed compliment here incidentally conveyed to Revelation, in being made the analogue of Natural Religion, Mr. Mansel palpably forgets that the Christian Revelation stands embodied, by its own terms, not in any conceptions of any sort which are at all limitary of the Divine infinitude, but exclusively in the lineaments of a life so perfect, so infinite in the truest sense of the word, as rationally to avouch itself intimately one with, and undistinguishable from, the Divine life. The very head and front of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, is, that in this crucified and RISEN man, in this suffering and as such glorified form, every Divine perfection is revealed in unblemished lustre, so that he who sees him sees the eternal Father. The pretension may be unfound-

ed if you please: that is another question: but to deny that it was distinctly and persistently made by Christ and his apostles is very unbecoming Mr. Mansel's great perspicacity.

But this by the way. Our only aim at present is to get at Mr. Mansel's profuse and unsuspected testimony to the growing imbecility of philosophic speculation.

As a necessary consequence of the limitation thus put upon our faculties, according to Mr. Mansel, by Philosophy, "it follows," he goes on to allege in his third Lecture, "that an act of creation in the highest sense of the term, that is to say, an absolutely first link in the chain of phenomena preceded by no temporal antecedent is to human thought inconceivable."

Why? Certainly not because there is any real incongruity between the truth of creation, philosophically disengaged from sense, and our faculties; but simply because the view which Mr. Mansel here takes of creation, as a physical rather than a spiritual procedure of God, conditioned not upon the heart and mind of man but upon the laws of space and time, is itself born of sense exclusively, and has not yet undergone the chastening discipline of Philosophy. Undoubtedly an act of creation as defined by Mr. Mansel, or as taking place in space and time, is incredible and inconceivable, because space and time being themselves laws of a finite or created intelligence, must of necessity fall within creation and never outside of it. The scandal is that a person of Mr. Mansel's merited distinction

should content himself with that childish conception of creation, and piously stultify both himself and his readers by pretending that what is intrinsically out of all relation to our faculties may yet be believed by them: or that what is inconceivable may still be credible.

"In religion" proceeds Mr. Mansel, "in morals, in our daily business, in the care of our lives, in the exercise of our senses, the rules which guide our practice cannot be reduced to principles which satisfy our reason."[1] In other words it is the dictate of the most enlightened Philosophy that an internecine quarrel exists between our life and our understanding, between our heart and our head. Was ever before so palsying a conviction arrived at with so little apparent paralysis either to heart or head, with so little disturbance to the jocund flow of life? From the same lecture we learn that "it is to be expected that our apprehension of the revealed Deity should involve mysteries inscrutable and doubts insoluble by our present faculties;" though why a revelation expressly made by God himself to faculties which are also God-made, should be EXPECTED to deepen the very doubts, and darken the very obscurities it was intended fully to clear up, is not, to say the least, strikingly obvious.

But a truce to quotation. It is clear enough from what we have already seen, that Philosophy in thus dishonoring her own function is obstinately bent on suicide, and that unless the mania be promptly arrested at its source we shall soon be

[1] Lecture V.

called upon to furnish her with a tombstone and epitaph. Whence then does the mania come? It originates avowedly in the Kantian contribution to Philosophy: and a critical glance in that direction will help us to see not only how greatly this famous Immanuel Kant betrayed the Christian promise of his name in attempting to unsettle the foundations of human belief, but also how unworthily Sir William Hamilton and (especially) Mr. Mansel have acted in devoting their shining abilities not to the exposure and correction of that foolish work, but to its perpetuation and extension.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE important addition which Kant made to Philosophy consists in a new analysis of knowledge, which gives its subjective element as he conceives it, the decided primacy of what he calls its objective element. The old Philosophy erred in his estimation by allowing the matter of knowledge as constituted by the various things we are said to know, to preponderate over its form as constituted by our sensibility and intelligence. And by exactly reversing this order he thought he had succeeded in rectifying metaphysics, and earning the name of a philosophic Copernicus. The name is singularly ill-adjusted however, since Kant's rectification of the old metaphysics consists in making us the centre of intellectual movement and all other things circumferential to us; while the rectification which Copernicus operated in the popular astronomy altogether consisted in placing us in the circumference of physical motion, and removing its focus to the greatest possible distance from us. This is Kant's initial blunder, his unpardonable sin to Philosophy, that like a geographer who confounds the mouth of a river with its source he makes our knowledge take its rise in us as well as issue from us, and hence denies

it any absolute validity. Ever since his time accordingly Philosophy has been playing such fantastic tricks before high heaven, here deifying all things, there denying any Deity, as to degrade herself to the level of a common brawler, unfit any longer to occupy attention.

But let us look more closely at the matter in hand.

"All knowledge is a product of two factors, a knowing subject, and an external world. Of these two factors the latter furnishes our knowledge with experience as the matter, and the former with the conceptions of the understanding as the form, through which a connected knowledge — or synthesis of our perceptions in a whole of experience — first becomes possible. If there were no external world, then there would be no phenomena; if there were no understanding, then these phenomena which are infinitely manifold would never be brought into the unity of a notion, and then no experience were possible. Thus while intuitions without conceptions are blind, and conceptions without intuitions are empty, knowledge is a union of the two, since it requires that the form of the conception should be filled with the matter of experience, and that the matter of experience should be apprehended in the net of the understanding's conceptions."[1]

We have not yet got the entire *corpus delicti* under our view, but let us pause here to establish a few preliminary considerations, which go to

[1] I quote from Schwegler's excellent manual of *The History of Philosophy*, translated by Julius H. Seelye, pp. 230, 231.

prove this elaborate pedantry a pure superfluity, so far as the fact of knowledge is concerned.

Doubtless the foregoing analysis does convey a sort of general predicament of the great fact of knowledge; such a predicament as you put a coat in, logically, when you mention a tailor and a piece of cloth. Every coat of course logically pre-dicates a tailor and a piece of cloth, but you convey a very inadequate notion of the actual garment by enumerating these purely constitutional elements of it. I utterly refuse to conceive the coat upon such niggardly terms. I am free to admit that the tailor and the cloth are necessary *data* of the coat, are logically implied in its constitution: but this sort of knowledge is purely scientific as interesting only the tailor and manufacturer, and not philosophic as interesting all mankind. As a philosopher I am not concerned to ask what gives the garment phenomenality, but only what gives it being. In other words I do not ask what makes the garment, *i. e.* what elements enter into its material constitution; but only what creates it or gives it absolute existence. The coat itself or spiritually, *i. e.* in the use or power it exerts, is something very different and superior to the material elements which go to constitute it: it indeed involves (or presupposes) these elements, and can therefore never be involved in them. The coat when truly conceived, when conceived as a finished garment, causes both the tailor and the piece of cloth to disappear in the bosom of its own unity or individuality, whence they never

reappear till the coat itself disappears or falls to pieces. The tailor and the cloth furnish an unexceptionable material parentage to the coat; they combine to give it visible existence or embodiment, so that no coat could ever appear without the sartorial art on the one side to give it soul or paternity, and a tegumentary tissue on the other to give it body or maternity. But obviously the coat is not merely a visible existence, it possesses also an invisible or spiritual BEING in that distinctive use or power which it exerts over other existence, and which accordingly constitutes its true individuality, its distinctive personality or discrimination from all other things.

Now the philosopher I repeat is concerned only with this invisible spiritual substance of the coat, this absolute individuality of it, which alone ordains its visible constitution, and makes it comprehend within itself both tailor and clothier. The coat itself is neither the tailor who makes it, nor the cloth out of which it is made; though both of these things are prerequisites of its phenomenal apparition: neither is it any conceivable combination of the two which yet leaves them reciprocally discernible; since every coat in proportion to its desert of its name, makes you forget both tailor and cloth, and never recalls them to mind until it ceases to be itself, *i. e.* until its merely constitutional side comes uppermost again by the garment itself falling into decrepitude and decay. The invisible substance of the coat which is its use, is

what alone gives it unity or individuality; is what alone creates it, *i. e.* gives it true being, or causes it to exist not only to our perception or relatively, but also in itself or absolutely. The constitutional elements of the coat, which are the tailor and the piece of cloth, are equally implicated in a thousand other existences, and do not therefore contribute to the coat that element of individuality, without which it would not be a coat, but might be a pair of trousers or anything else having like constitutional identity. This element is purely spiritual, consisting in the distinctive use the coat fulfils, the characteristic service it renders to other existence, a use or service which never meets the eye, but certainly is not therefore the less but all the more spiritually discernible. It is thus the use of the coat exclusively which gives it invisible being, or spiritually creates it; and hence infallibly prescribes that material constitution by which it exists visibly to us.

This spiritual side of existence then, this absolute or creative aspect of it, which includes in itself and accounts for the entire lower world of its relative or phenomenal existence, is what alone interests Philosophy: and this unhappily is what Kant and especially Sir William Hamilton are treacherous to. Philosophy is not a search into the material constitution of things, into what is purely phenomenal and relative in existence. This is the exclusive domain of science. Philosophy seeks to know only what is essential to things, demands to know

what is that living or substantial reality which invariably determines their material constitution, and forbids it to be different from what it actually is. It takes the existing constitution of things as determined by science for granted; and then demands what it is which alone confers this fixed constitution upon things, which makes them precisely what they are, and forbids them ever to be otherwise. That is to say, it asks what is the creative substance under all this conflict of appearances, what its most intimate verity, what its fundamental *raison d'être*. Kant on the contrary degrades Philosophy to the level of Science by identifying the spiritual essence of things with their sensuous constitution, so turning Philosophy from an inquiry into the absolute being of things, to an investigation of their phenomenal existence. He makes it an analysis primarily of the constitution of existence; and as he finds there no trace of being, no evidence of creation, no sign of life or infinitude, he at once declares that Philosophy is an incompetent witness to these truths, and devolves its burden upon the moral instinct.

Every fact of life or consciousness doubtless, like every fact of experience, involves a constitutional side which gives it identity with all other existence, and adapts it to our capacity of sensuous recognition. But you give a monstrously false notion of the living fact, if you attempt to run it into these sensuous conditions. Knowledge does indeed always pre-suppose on its constitutional side, does always pred-

icate in other words to the understanding of a looker-on, a thing knowing and a thing known. But the precise miracle of the living fact — the very life of the conscious experience — is, that it utterly obliterates the discrimination which sense alleges between these elements, and blends or fuses them in its own unitary and absolute individuality. Life or consciousness always unites what mere existence or sense disunites; so that to attempt reproducing the living experience called knowledge, by alleging its purely constitutional elements or simples, would be like attempting to convey an image of a trunk by enumerating its contents, or to give an idea of marriage by evoking the lineaments of a mourning bride and a bereaved husband. As marriage is nothing if it be not indissoluble, as it confesses itself instantly falsified by whatsoever impedes the essential unity of the parties to it, so every fact of life or consciousness supposes a complete fusion of man and nature, supposes a marriage between them so real and vital as to make any subsequent divorce, such as Kant alleges in his discrimination of subject and object, of the me and the not-me, utterly futile and impracticable. Yet the whole current Philosophy of Perception is built upon this shallow fallacy of observation, upon this profoundly vicious and incompetent estimate of the fact in hand; and no rectification of it is possible therefore unless we clearly understand ourselves here.

What we have already seen is, that science is a research into the physical constitution of things,

into whatsoever gives them visible body or existence, and so relates them to our intelligence; while Philosophy is a research exclusively into the spiritual essence of things, into whatsoever gives them invisible being, or stamps their existence absolute and independent of our intelligence. Science guards the natural pedigree of existence; Philosophy takes all that labor for granted, and cares only to assert the spiritual essence of the existence thus generated. Now what we are about to scrutinize is, the endless imbecility which Kant has fathered upon Philosophy by confounding these utterly distinct fields of research; that is to say, by sinking the Infinite in the finite, dissolving life in mere existence, and running the philosopher into the logician. The whole subsequent evolution of Philosophy in Germany, starting from this initial blunder, has tended towards such a deadly objectifying of the me to its own consciousness, that Hegel or somebody else in his place was bound to put a climax to the speculative dotage and delirium of his race, by gravely proclaiming the identity of being and thought, or what is the same thing, making God to be vivified by us rather than us by Him. But let us begin at the beginning.

Our intelligence is conversant with two orders of facts: 1. facts of Life, which are known only from within, or by Consciousness; 2. facts of Existence, which are known only from without, or by Sense. The rose, the horse, the mountain, the lake, the stars, the man, are facts of

existence simply, which are given in my sensible organization, and are consequently known only *ab extra.* But the emotion of delight I experience when I view the lake spreading its smiling bosom before my window, bounded by the verdurous slopes of the opposite mountain, and reflecting now the busy industry of man, now the repose of the tranquil heavens, is exclusively a fact of life, shut up to my proper consciousness, or known only from within. and quite above the power of sense to produce or even adequately to report. The senses involve in their varied realm all the scattered particulars, or merely material constituents, of the landscape; but the joy I experience in seeing these disunited details, these *disjecta membra*, melt into living unison, is a purely spiritual fact, denoting a sensibility greatly interior and superior to that of my body. No doubt the animal sees — so far as the mere organic fact of sight is concerned — every material feature of the landscape just as we see it, perhaps better. But that which gives these things all their charm and meaning to us, and which is their fitness to reflect a certain interior sentiment we profoundly feel of the spiritual unity that constitutes Life, and binds all existence together, this is entirely lacking to the animal, however superior he may be to us in sensible organization, and can never by any possibility be communicated to him.

Try the experiment. Suppose for example that you lead your horse, some starry night, to an eminence whence an unobstructed view of

the heavens may be commanded. He will doubtless see the stars, see those which fall under the horizon of his vision, quite as accurately as you see them. But will he also look at them? Will his gaze be attracted and riveted to them as yours is? Will he feel the emotions of grandeur you feel, those intimations of a life higher than the stars, which makes their hoariest orbs seem indeed but of yesterday, and turns the overpowering galaxy itself into glittering tinsel? Assuredly not. He will snuff and nibble the obscure herbage at his feet by way of pastime, and will remind you by an expostulatory snort, that good straw is awaiting him in the warm stable whence you have so superfluously dislodged him. But as for any sympathy with you, that is absurd. The horse sees the spectacle, it is only you who regard and admire it. What then is the inference? It is, manifestly, that his proper life is all contained and exhausted in his natural organization, and the experience which that enfolds; while your proper life on the other hand, the distinctively human life, which is spiritual, being garnered away in the Divine depths of consciousness, only ultimates itself in Nature, and feels itself at best but dimly imaged, but feebly reflected, in her most vital experiences. It is in fact always and only the infinite and ineffable Divine beauty which struggles to make itself known in these emphatic natural experiences; which lets itself down so to speak in these transcendent moments to our rapt intelligence: and

in the surprise of the rich discovery, in the bewilderment of such unsuspected wealth, we often very generously accredit Nature itself, which is but the stupendous mirror of the transaction, with a glory not its own.

Thus life clearly pre-supposes existence, or consciousness presupposes sense, just as a finished house presupposes bricks and mortar: but as he would be a monstrous dolt who should be content to define a house by analyzing it into these base materials, so he who confounds life with existence, consciousness with sense, proves himself incompetent to deal with questions of this magnitude. As in resolving a house into the material elements involved in its construction, you utterly leave out its characteristic soul or individuality which is its form, and which is no material existence whatever but a wholly spiritual one, being a pure derivation of the architectonic art, demanding all these material conditions for its own manifestation: so *à fortiori* when you relegate life into those facts of mere existence which relate it to our intelligence, you utterly evaporate its creative spirit, or reduce it to instant unconsciousness by destroying its individuality. No one looking at a house and estimating its distinctive character or individuality, regards or even sees the bricks and mortar implied in its structure. These things unless the architect has been a noodle, are forever covered up from sight, only to reveal themselves again when the edifice shall have tumbled into dilapidation. Every house accordingly that deserves

the name stands forth to the beholder a pure form of heavenly Art, beckoning onward and upward the soul.

In like manner precisely in estimating a distinctive fact of life, you have nothing whatever to do with those purely constitutional conditions which ally it with all other facts; your business lies exclusively with that thing which separates it from all other facts, and causes it to be itself, or gives it absoluteness. You may analyze existence to its last gasp and you will never lay your hand upon a fact of life; simply because life is in all cases a spiritual fact, being known only by consciousness or from within, never by sense or from without. It is true that before the horse can realize his proper life, *i. e.* before he can consciously enjoy his oats, and fling up his heels in the abundance of his pasturage, he must have a basis for it in an organized natural existence. But you may ransack this organized natural existence to its primitive germ, without ever catching a whisper of the life the horse enjoys, without discerning a gleam of the horse himself, in other words. In fact the deeper your analysis goes the further you get away from the living animal, from the realm of life or consciousness: for life is built only upon the intensest synthesis or unity of existence, and shrinks aghast therefore from its analysis or dissolution. So too all the facts of our proper life or consciousness presuppose our physical organization, involving as its contents the universe of nature. But you may traverse this organization to its core, without

detecting a solitary ray of Life. Life presupposes organization, that is to say, it begins only where organization ends or is perfected; and to look for it therefore among the mere contents of organization, or in any analysis however subtle of existence, would be like looking into the works of a watch to ascertain the time of day. Undoubtedly the works of a watch are all presupposed in the creative spirit of the watch, which is its distinctive use; just as our physical organization involving in itself the universe of sense, is presupposed in our conscious life or selfhood. But what would you think of a droll, who, when you asked him the time of day, should insist upon consulting the bowels of his watch rather than its dial-plate?

CHAPTER XVIII.

The error I have just pointed out is nevertheless the precise infatuation of the Kantian philosophy. You ask Kant a question of creative substance or spirit, and he answers you by an analysis of constitutive surface or body. You ask him what creates things, or gives them absolute being irrespective of our intelligence: he replies by telling you what produces them to sense, or gives them phenomenal existence. You ask him to explain to you the great supernal mystery of selfhood or Life, and he hastens to plunge his foolish head in the purely subterranean fact of existence. In short you expect him to marshal you into the drawing-room of the palace, and he incontinently locks you up in the kitchen. We know well enough by our unassisted senses, and without any thanks to Philosophy, that the rose is one form of existence and man another; that the lake and the mountain, the stars and the earth, however much they may afford materials to our life or consciousness, are yet not it; are sensibly most distinct from us. But where the philosopher might help us if he would; *i. e.* if he himself had ever previously been a learner; is just here, touching this majestic fact of life or consciousness, which thus oblit-

erates in the bosom of its own unity all these conflicting facts of sense or existence. When we drink in the fragance of the rose, or the beauty of the morning and evening landscape, these facts of a divided or disunited existence most miraculously melt into the grander fact of a unitary life; so that it becomes impossible for us to discriminate where in the new experience the rose ends and we begin, or to say how much of the effect is contributed by the landscape and how much by ourselves. The distinction which sense alleges between us and nature becomes completely wiped out in the higher fusion operated by consciousness; so that we feel ourselves expand as it were for the moment into universal dimensions and lap up all nature in the bosom of our individuality.

Every fact of life or consciousness proceeds in other words upon the implication of a strictly conjugal tie between our sensible organization and the outlying world. It implies a complete marriage fusion or unity of these sensibly unwedded atoms, man and rose, man and water, man and sky, man and universal nature. It is this standing miracle, accordingly, which you ask Philosophy to account for; this superb energy of life which compels all existence into its abject yet delighted subserviency. Every field of existence quivers with the acknowledgment of it. The mineral attests it in the phenomena of crystallization, the vegetable in the higher phenomena of sensation, the animal in the still higher ones of volition, and man in the highest

of all, those of taste or spontaneous attraction. It is the power of gravitation in the mineral, of growth in the vegetable, of motion in the animal, and of action in man. But it is manifestly one and the same power under all these diversified modes of exhibition, since it shows them all concurring to one and the same end, which is the highest possible potentialization of the human form, in the promotion of its endless dominion over nature. You accordingly ask the philosopher to account for this stupendous marvel of Life, which fuses all existence in the unity of a beneficent spiritual end, compelling it in fact into the proportions of an infinitely various but infinitely harmonious human form. What does the shameless fellow thereupon do? Does he instantly down upon his knees in mute because ecstatic acknowledgment of the Highest? Not a bit of it. He incontinently turns his back upon the overwhelming spectacle, and commences grubbing away like a blear-eyed mole in the mud of mere existence, to prove to you that he there finds a solution of the great mystery equally disenchanting to one's child-like adoration, and elevating to one's manly self-conceit. Life forsooth, or consciousness, is merely subject and object, the me and the not-me, in eternal correlation!

Sir William Hamilton especially revels in this shallow identification of spiritual cause or substance with material form or constitution. He invariably confounds (in practice) the *causa essendi* of a phenomenon which is its spiritual

individuality, with its *causa cognoscendi* which is its material identity; so swamping the creative spirit in the created body. In fact the special addition he has made to Philosophy consists of a new theory of the causal judgment which utterly empties it of philosophic import, by reducing it in all cases to an expression of our scientific incapacity to recognize anything beyond finite existence. Undoubtedly we do not sensibly discern anything but finite existence; but then finite existence is precisely that thing which we never feel any need to account for, which, in other words, never suggests the idea of cause. Cause is invariably suggested by the perception of a change which has come over the face of finite existence, of an interruption to its continuity; so that so far from the term being ever employed to indicate as Sir William Hamilton would persuade us, anything in the fixed constitution of existence, it is never so employed, being always in use to express some new phenomenon of life or motion.

For example, I come into my library and see my papers which I had left a short time ago in complete order, turned topsy-turvy. Nothing whatever in the constitution of things accounts for this. So far as the mere existence of the papers is concerned they would have continued to exist forever as I left them, until they were interfered with by something uncomprised in that existence. I am compelled accordingly to demand a cause for the phenomenon, which the phenomenon itself does not include and cannot

therefore reveal. This is the universal force of the causal judgment, to separate between life and mere existence, by denying spontaneity to things, or proving that their being is not in themselves but in something greatly superior to themselves. Never accordingly was a shabbier dereliction of Philosophy practised than by this *emeritus* professor, in thus violently emasculating the idea of cause. He has not the slightest misgiving in robbing the judgment of its immemorial power spiritually to recreate the mind by lifting it out of routine, or revealing the activity of something additional to mere existence. Comte himself could not have been more forward to claim an exact "identity of existence" between cause and effect, between the *causatum* and the *causæ*.[1] See for example in the following passage where he is expressly elucidating the idea of cause, with what a remorseless oblivion of every obligation imposed by his vocation he proceeds to sink the philosopher in the mere chemist. "A neutral salt is the product, the combination, of an alkali and an acid. Now considering the salt as an effect, what are the concurrent causes — the co-efficients — which constitute it what it is:" (to sight of course) "these are, first, the acid, with its affinity for the alkali; secondly, the alkali, with its affinity for the acid; and thirdly, the translating force (perhaps the human hand) which made these affinities available by

[1] *Discussions*, pp. 609–625. The exposition there given is too long for quotation in this place. Consult also the *Lectures*, Vol. I. p. 59, and Vol. II. pp. 376–413.

bringing the two bodies within the sphere of mutual attraction."[1]

This is doubtless very innocent scientific prattle, but it is very ludicrous philosophy; and it will be a lasting discredit to Sir William Hamilton's critical acumen that he should have boggled at so egregious a discrimination. In the first place what an extraordinary example of causation he adduces! Who but a philosopher beside-himself would ever dream of asking the cause of a mere fact of existence? Suppose Sir William Hamilton going into a chemist's shop in Edinburgh, and demanding with a grave face "the cause of saltpetre." Would not the chemist reply at once, with a smile at the simplicity of his questioner, "that the cause of saltpetre as a fact of existence was doubtless one with the cause of all other facts of existence, and that he, as a chemist, would be sorry to obtrude so far upon the domain of Philosophy as to attempt teaching the philosopher himself how Divine that cause was: but that if as was probable by the cause of saltpetre he meant not its cause philosophically speaking, but only its constitution chemically speaking, he should be happy to inform him that it was nitric acid 54 and potash 47.2."

Philosophy has nothing whatever to do with the constitution of things or their production to sight, that is, with the material realm, the realm of organization or body; and it is science alone accordingly which teaches the chemist that a

[1] *Lectures on Metaphysics*, Vol. I. pp. 59, 60.

neutral salt is the product of an acid and an alkali; for the chemist is expected to supply the public with the commodity in question, and he depends upon science to tell him under what invariable constitutional conditions it will be forthcoming. Philosophy deals only with the essence of things, that is with the spiritual realm, the realm of life — of consciousness — of creative substance in a word — where science never penetrates, to which indeed she is incapable of lifting an eye. The philosopher has no commercial ends, and he would be extremely sorry to consider a library of the best digested scientific information bearing upon such ends, equivalent to the feeblest lispings of Divine Philosophy. He does not as a philosopher care to know therefore what a neutral salt is on its merely generative or constitutional side; he does not ask who are its father and mother, or what materially produces it, *i. e.* allies it with all other existence by giving it identity; but only what spiritually creates it, *i. e.* separates it from all other existence by giving it individuality, or endowing it with this splendid power of neutralizing its own material contents, of renouncing its own father and mother.

Like every other substance in nature, this salt reveals a power above nature itself, the power of pre-determining its own natural constitution, or uniting the most opposite things at the sole behest of its sovereign pleasure. And the true philosopher laughs accordingly at his *pseudo* brother, or at the chemist, who should

insist upon seeing nothing in it, but a product or combination of natural elements. He says to the man of science: "You may go on combining these natural elements to all eternity, but unless the salt itself first prescribe the conditions of its manifestation, first dictate the invariable terms of its spiritual surrender, you will get no result. Now it is precisely and exclusively this creative or dictatorial power of the salt over its own constitution, which interests me as a philosopher: this spiritual or life-side of the phenomenon which, according to your own testimony, exhibits it prescribing its own material contents, not one atom more, not one atom less; so that you, when you would artificially evoke its presence, are bound to use that magic spell. Of course as a chemist you have no philosophic aim: that is to say, chemistry deals only with the material aspect of the salt, the aspect which it presents as a marketable product, and which comes to light only when its philosophic interest has evaporated, that is, when the living salt has died out under the fires of your torturing analysis. Your analysis destroys exactly what the philosopher values in the phenomenon, which is its spiritual individuality or life. It sinks the living personality of the salt in its own purely constitutional or corporeal elements, drowns the vital spirit in its own material body, leaving it only a ghostly and ghastly resuscitation in your formula of 'the law of definite proportions.' For this law is only your pedantic scientific homage to the great creative presence itself.

When for example you announce the constitutional formula of saltpetre as nitric acid 54 and potash 47.2, you simply mean to say that if you fulfil this prescribed conjuration, the salt itself will appear: *i. e.* these servile constitutional elements will disappear in their own creative substance, will become glorified into a higher form of life, into a superior personality, than they themselves have any intrinsic title to. Plainly then the acid and the alkali do not create the salt: at most they phenomenally constitute it, *i. e.* produce it to sight in a given time and place; the acid giving it paternity or soul, the alkali giving it maternity or body. It is the salt on the contrary which creates them by exacting them as the invariable purchase of its own phenomenality. It may be said also, and to the extent of your interference — the extent of what Sir William Hamilton calls your translating hand — to create you as well, the humble minister of science who brings the elements together; since it is the very salt itself which furnishes you the only ritual capable of legitimating the nuptials."

The conception of cause obviously differs from that of creation in this respect, that the former always presupposes existence, while the latter is always presupposed by it. Cause is a demand which is made by my intelligence in order to explain an otherwise inexplicable change which has come over the face of existence: thus it presupposes existence and an intelligent consciousness of existence. But creation is demanded by existence itself: not by existence

regarded as a changeable phenomenon, but as an orderly permanent quantity.

Cause is always suggested to us by some breach of natural order, by some interruption to the observed continuity of existence. Experience teaches us to confide in the uniformity of nature, in her inability to be different at one time from what she is at another: whenever therefore we see this uniformity violated, we are instinctively led to postulate some fact above nature itself, some fact of life or personality, as necessary to account for it. In demanding a cause for the supposed disorder of my manuscripts, it is obviously not a fact of ordinary existence which prompts the demand, but exclusively a fact of disturbance to such existence. No new fact of existence attracts my attention, but only some change which has come over the face of the old facts. Experience affirms that the old facts have no power of spontaneous change, that they are essentially passive or devoid of personality; and therefore when any change ensues we instinctively demand a cause outside of the facts themselves. Causation is thus a direct confession of Nature's insufficiency to herself, a direct disclaimer of her power to originate any of her own phenomena: and hence it involves an indirect attestation to the spiritual substance from which all natural existence flows.

It was Sir William Hamilton's failure accurately to observe and accurately to discriminate here, which led him to his extravagant specu-

lations in regard to the nature of the causal judgment, upon which nevertheless he evidently set a very high value. His account of the transaction is briefly this: "When aware of a new appearance we are unable to conceive that therein has originated any new existence; and are therefore constrained to think that what now appears to us under a new form had previously an existence under others. — We are utterly unable to construe it in thought as possible that the complement of existence has been either increased or diminished. We cannot conceive either on the one hand nothing becoming something, or on the other something becoming nothing."[1]

This recondite theory of causation has nothing to justify it but a sheer fallacy of observation, of which any man of plain unlettered common sense would hardly have been guilty. Sir William very thoughtlessly supposed that the realm of causal investigation was the finite realm, the realm of sense; not the phenomenal realm, the realm of reason. He supposed in other words that men were in the habit of investigating the cause of *things*, that is of finite existence: that you might go for example to a chemist's shop and demand the cause of saltpetre (meaning thereby its chemical constituents), without in the least disconcerting the chemist or upsetting the gravity of his apprentice. The thing is absurd. No such actual event could ever occur. No one practically ever confounds

[1] *Discussions*, 609, 610. See also *Lectures on Metaphysics*, Lectures 39 and 40 throughout.

cause with constitution. It is only the philosopher who is speculatively *aux abois* that ever finds himself drifting at this helpless and melancholy rate. In practice one never dreams of asking a cause for *things*, for fixed existence, but only for the observed vicissitudes to which they are liable. *Things* we suppose to be created not caused. *Phenomena*, that is, the mutations to which things are subject inwardly and outwardly, we claim to be caused not created. Things have an absolute existence to sense, and never suggest the conception which is implied in all causation, that they exist for the sake of something else than themselves. The origin of things, or of finite existence, is a question of pure Philosophy, not of science, all whose attention goes to ascertaining the purely logical relations of unity and variety which characterize finite existence to our apprehension, and noting the purely phenomenal modifications to which its forms are incidentally and accidentally exposed. The vulgar designation of the creator as a cause (the First cause) is owing exclusively to this inveterate habit among philosophers, of reducing questions of pure Philosophy (such for example, as the origin of existence) to questions of science, to the extent of envisaging creation itself at last as a mere event in space and time. The question of creation which is a question not about any event in space and time, but about the origin of space and time themselves, is a purely philosophic question, wholly insoluble by any scientific acumen, and disdain-

ing therefore the application of the ordinary causal induction.

Apart from this erroneous application of it, the word cause is never used but to denote purely phenomenal or insubstantial existence, existence which is not self-pronounced or absolute; and which therefore exacts something besides itself to account for it. For example; seeing a man fall down in the street I ask of the bystanders the cause of the event, as being manifestly one which does not explain itself, and therefore demands some controlling external agency. It is not any addition to existence which arrests my attention; it is not any substantive thing added to the precedent sum of things; but merely an unlooked-for affection or change of some thing or things already in being. Such is the universal force of the word, to characterize evanescent or insubstantial existence, existence which has no substance in itself, but depends upon other existence. Sir William Hamilton's fancy accordingly that the word is used, not merely to account for the changes which finite things undergo, but also to account for finite things themselves, is a pure fancy; only to be legitimated by such an exaggeration of the realm of phenomena as blots out finite existence altogether.

This in fact is what Sir William does not hesitate to do. He maintains[1] that everything embraced in the realm whether of sense or rea-

[1] See his writings *passim*; but specifically his *Lectures on Metaphysics*, Lectures VIII. and IX.

son is purely phenomenal; thus that the horse I see is no way an absolute or substantive but a strictly relative existence, whose cause consequently I am bound to refer to something else. The absurdity of the conception becomes sufficiently obvious when you reflect, that probably since the world has stood no man has ever yet actually asked of his neighbor or himself, "the cause of a horse." But the fallacy upon which the judgment rests is equally obvious. It consists in confounding the *data* of reason with those of sense, and inferring that what is relative or phenomenal existence in the eyes of the former, cannot be absolute existence in the eyes of the latter.

Yet the truth is exactly and demonstrably contrary. To my senses the horse is and always will be an absolute existence, having his *raison d'être* in himself exclusively and out of all relation to other existence. You may indeed convince me by the allegation of certain particulars not included in sense, that absolute as the animal seems to my eyes he is nevertheless in reality related one way or another to all existence: what then? My sensible judgment is utterly unaffected by the conviction, and the horse seems now just as absolute as he did before. Why? Evidently because your proof of his relativity addresses my reason alone or the reflective understanding, which is my faculty of perceiving relations; never my senses or the perceptive understanding, which is my faculty of perceiving things. And consequently the

horse will continue, so far as the latter are concerned, to exist absolutely, and out of all relation to other things. Reason may transcend sense, no doubt; may justly refuse to be bound by her utterances; but she can never alter them. Copernicus himself, though the geocentric theory was very repugnant to his reason, nevertheless remained, so far as his senses were concerned, an unfaltering adherent of it to the end of his days.

Had reason indeed the power which Sir William Hamilton thus implicitly ascribes to it, of imposing its own oracles upon sense, or making sense acknowledge that to be relative or phenomenal which a moment before it felt to be fixed and absolute, then of course our senses would at once forfeit their own distinctive faculty of discernment. That is to say, the horse would cease even to seem the horse, would lose his visible identity and merge in other existence, if indeed formal altereity could still be affirmed where substantial identity was denied. In short to all the extent of our sensible existence we should find chaos and ancient night fully restored.

But the pretension is even ludicrously unsupported. The senses by an instinct of their proper conservation deny phenomenality to *things*, to whatsoever has distinctive form or body. Whatsoever has corporeal fixity or finiteness, whatsoever appears to exist in independence of other things, as mineral vegetable or animal, and does not openly confess itself a mere shadow and

appanage of other existence, is received by sense with unquestioning confidence and recognized as absolute. We never demand a cause of such things. Cause is never wanted to explain substantial but superficial existence. It is suggested only where we see lack of substance, *i. e.* where the change which supervenes upon existing things is not explained by the things themselves, and consequently suggests something additional to them.

Let there be no obscurity on my meaning. Cause I say is never employed to explain new existence, or to account for the origin of *things* properly speaking; but solely to elucidate a change or perturbation which has come over the face of old existence. The conception of a new existence in nature, either positively or negatively, never enters into our experience of the causal judgment. In plain English cause is never summoned in practical life to account for any fact of orderly constitutional existence at all; but exclusively to explicate those observed vicissitudes and interruptions to which all such facts are liable. No one ever asks the cause of day or the cause of night, because these things belong to the fixed order of nature: but let the light of day become suddenly eclipsed, or the darkness of night irradiated by what is called "the northern lights," and instantly every one is alert to postulate a cause of the phenomenon. It is never any universal fact of order which cause is challenged to explain, but always some quite specific fact of disorder. Even in the

way of negation therefore the causal judgment never implies the conception of new existence, but at most the disintegration of old existence. Its evident purpose is to stamp nature with imbecility to our apprehension, by proving her most fixed order, her most absolute existences, subject to perturbations and mutations which they themselves are alike unable to explain or to resist. This mysterious play of life which everywhere breaks up the even tenor of existence and waylays our footsteps with endless surprises, infallibly disengages the mind from nature and educates it to the discernment of higher things: since our habitual experience of nature's stability forbids us to attribute it to her, and binds us to ascribe it to some superior source.

But let me endeavor to make all I have said with regard to the causal judgment clear by a familiar illustration.

I come into my library some morning and find the clock which I had left upright in its place on the mantel-piece, lying now in shattered fragments on the floor: and I of course set myself at once to explore the cause of the disaster: *i. e.* to trace out the living *nexus* which binds the precedent fact to the subsequent one; in other words, accounts for the change I witness.

Now in the first place what is the origin of this overpowering intellectual instinct on my part? Why am I irresistibly impelled to trace back the change I witness to some living agency; *i. e.* to something not given in the actual facts? Why do I not accept disaster as the animal

does, that is, as a simple *fait accompli* or matter of course, demanding no rational inquisition into its antecedents, suggesting no rational dread of its consequents! Why is it that I do not acquiesce in it as I acquiesce in green peas, or strawberries, or any other fact of nature, and without this restless curiosity to get behind the event and ascertain what I call its cause?

It will not do to say that prudence, or the desire to shield myself as far as possible from similar costly contingencies in the future, forms the chief part of my motive. Prudence no doubt accounts very well for my purely personal and adventitious interest in the inquiry; but it does not explain my rational or scientific curiosity in the premises. My rational or scientific interest in the investigation is urged, altogether, by the consideration that it is not a visible fact of sense or nature which arrests my attention, but a strictly invisible fact of relation, which therefore legitimately piques my scientific curiosity. A certain relation unintelligible to sense has suddenly declared itself between two facts of existence or nature: 1. the clock standing upright on the mantel-piece; 2. the same clock lying prostrate on the floor: and my scientific instinct, or faculty of discerning relations, at once prompts me to trace out the hidden link of connection between the two facts. Thus the reader perceives that the appeal is not at all to my senses, or the faculty whereby I apprehend simple existence, but exclusively to my reason which is the faculty whereby I apprehend organized

composite or relative existence. In fact the origin of the causal judgment lies altogether in the necessity which the intellect of man is under, in order to be intellect, of separating itself from sense, or renouncing the latter's mastery. I feel, as man, a rational instinct of revolt against the dogmatism of sense which teaches me that everything substantially is what it formally appears; thus that nature constitutes her own substance: and my demand of cause is the invariable signal of this revolt. My intellect becomes built up exactly in the measure of my yielding to it, or following it out to its last and most negative results; because it becomes empowered by this preparatory discipline to acknowledge the consummate deliverance of Philosophy; which is, that as all the shifting events or phenomena of nature refer themselves finally to one cause, the finite will, so all her most fixed and absolute or independent existences refer themselves to one creator, infinite in love and wisdom.

To apply this to the case before us: all my precedent experience of nature, all my observation of the essential passivity of existence, forbids me to suppose that the disaster before me originated spontaneously, or grew as we say out of the nature of things. I know with entire certainty that clocks have no such selfhood or power of originating their own activity, as would invest the one in question with the responsibility of what has befallen it, or justify me consequently in regarding the disaster as an absolute event, as an incident involved in the personality of the

clock. My intelligence demands a cause for the disaster therefore not in things intrinsic and incidental to the clock, but altogether in things extrinsic and accidental: thereby explicitly denying that the life or power manifested belongs to the natural objects involved, and so far forth of course implicitly affirming that it acknowledges a truly supernatural or spiritual derivation.

But now, in the second place, suppose the scientific inquest ended, and the verdict arrived at that the disaster proceeded from the *maladresse* of some adventurous child or awkward servant. Is the mind completely tranquillized by that verdict? That is, are our philosophic instincts also perfectly appeased? By no means. Why not? Because Philosophy is never content like science to ascertain the relative in existence, but goes on to demand its absolute ground. Science has found in the child or the housemaid that living link of connection she was in search of between the clock on the shelf at one moment, and on the floor the next; and retires from the field not a little satisfied with her own prowess. But Philosophy demands what unitary life it is that thus vivifies the varied life of nature: who supremely or at last it is that lives in this child or housemaid, rendering them capable of disturbing our repose, and damaging our property. Thus Philosophy does not begin to be satisfied with the verdict which satisfies science; because no such connection is yet avouched between the event in question and the personality of the actor in it, as makes the event necessary; or

exhausts the fertility of cause, in suggesting the presence of life truly spontaneous or creative. I may still if I please push onward the scientific research of cause, by demanding what *makes* children so adventurous, and what *makes* housemaids so unhandy. It is only when all this preliminary rubbish has been surmounted, and science brings me up against some fact of will, some evidence of moral existence, that Philosophy becomes entitled to take matters into her own accomplished keeping.

Philosophy is a demonstration of the Infinite in the finite, of the Absolute in the relative; and so long therefore as science has not carried the finite and relative up to their highest term of evolution in moral existence, and so found a decisive limit to her exploration of cause, Philosophy is necessarily inoperative. If accordingly I can trace a moral connection between this event and the actor in it: if I can perceive that either the child or the servant acted with an intelligent foresight of the mischief to ensue, and what is more with a deliberate purpose to produce that mischief: then at last I shall have reached the limit of scientific inquiry, or touched upon what the unaided reason of man must always regard as absolute existence. I may now indeed go on to investigate the Origin of Evil in the abstract or general: but in this case my procedure ceases to be scientific and becomes properly philosophic. We know nothing beyond sensible existence. We believe only in moral or rational existence.

Neither sense nor reason gives us the slightest intimation of spiritual existence, save in a negative superstitious way; and consequently they leave the field free henceforth to Philosophy. Unlike science Philosophy does not regard moral existence as final or absolute. On the contrary she sees in moral existence only the very dense shadow or phenomenal apparition of spiritual existence; and hence begins her inquiry after the absolute precisely where science leaves off inquiring. She builds her observatory in other words upon the very tallest star revealed in the heaven of science; and from that superlative earth alone commences a survey of the marvels of her own empyrean.

We may say then that the total positive force of the causal induction is mentally educative or disciplinary: being nothing more nor less than a constant denial of the autonomy of nature, a constant affirmation of her essential subserviency to something above herself. It is the dawn of the supernatural to our perception: the invincible attestation of a something not included in mere existence but on the contrary including it, namely, life or personality. We never ask, as we have seen, the cause of any fact of natural order; of day or night, of seed time or harvest, of mineral or vegetable, of animal or man: for these things exist absolutely to our senses, being in fact the very stuff of which our sensuous intelligence is constituted: but only of some perturbation of natural order,

some fact of life or motion not included in the uniform tenor of existence, and therefore additional to it. The causal inference is thus the very citadel of the supernatural to our experience. It binds us instinctively to deny nature as a finality, and to regard it everywhere and always as ministerial to something beyond itself.

CHAPTER XIX.

Mr. John Stuart Mill is a man in my judgment of far superior intellectual breadth to any of the persons I have been discussing. His intellect appears to me thoroughly penetrated and vivified by his heart; and though his opinions may reflect to some extent the defects of his early doctrinal training, one easily feels how small a matter that is beside the profound humanity which underlies all his judgments. In all Mr. Mill's books one feels the man very much more than the author; feels the upright human heart throbbing to such purpose, that he is certain the somewhat narrow systematic head will one day or other encounter the necessary enlargement. How can any one read that noble book of his upon Liberty without conceiving the liveliest respect and affection for the writer: it is so sincere, generous, and full of manly sympathy for the wants of the time. I know by the way nothing more touching and beautiful in modern literature than the homage of heart and understanding he there pays to the memory of his deceased wife, desolated shrine of the Lord's best intercourse with his soul. It is as if he had really seen while she lived the infinite substance shadowed in her tender and delicate

womanly form; and one yearns afresh in reading it for the time when — humanity being lifted to a higher level of life by the prevalence of superior social conditions — every woman will unaffectedly recognize herself as the priestess of a truly Divine worship, and every man shrink aghast consequently from offering upon the altar of her person the incense, now so common, of famished appetite and mercenary lust.

Yet even Mr. Mill evinces no discernment of the philosophic import of causation. He altogether omits from cause its philosophic implication, that is, the negative basis it affords in our minds to the conception of creation, and runs it instead into a positive scientific function intended at most to induct us into a knowledge of the constitution of existence. Undoubtedly the research of cause leads us incidentally to investigate the constitution of existence, and is thus productive of the best scientific results to the understanding; amounting in fact as I have already said to the complete enfranchisement of the reason, or scientific faculty, from the bondage of sense. But then these scientific results are purely incidental to the research in question, and by no means avouch its true philosophic scope and interest. For our invariable mental experience is, that traverse nature as we may, or sift the constitution of things to the utmost, we yet never come upon cause as a literal tangible entity, but are always forced to identify the sphere of its operation with the sphere of our moral activity. We only find in other

words that the sphere of cause is not physical, but purely mental. Philosophy alone is competent to say where and what cause is: to fill the conception out with its eternal substance, or declare what the positive reality is of which cause as scientifically interpreted has always been the unflinching but negative witness. The scientific recognition of cause has always been of this purely educative efficacy, as gradually leading the mind forth from the thraldom of nature, from the iron bondage of Fact, into the enlargement and freedom which flow from the presence of rational supersensual Truth. It has never been anything but the fruitful seminary or matrix of a superior philosophic idea, which is that of creation. It has always furnished a salutary half-way house to the intellect wherein the latter might find refreshment upon its toilsome pilgrimage towards absolute knowledge: it never pretended to provide it a home or to constitute the goal of its pilgrimage. At most it claims to be but a wayside inn, whence the traveller, recreated by a night's repose, is dislodged with the first streak of dawn to resume his staff and face again the kindling east.

Up to this negative point then — the point of telling us what and where cause is not — science is perfectly competent. If she go beyond it, and assume with Mr. Mill to tell us what cause positively is, and to indoctrinate us in its substance, she impinges on the office of Philosophy, and turns out on the instant a vain babbler. Why? Because the contact she has

with spiritual substance as we have seen is strictly negative or indirect, and consequently confers no positive qualification. In fact just as religion stands to the mind of the race in a purely generative and disciplinary relation, like that of the father to the child: so science bears a purely maternal and nutritive relation to it; the one giving it soul, the other body. Religion gives interior quickening or soul to the mind, just as the father gives it to the child; and science gives it outward body, as the mother gives outward body to the soul of the child, by building it up of her own substance, and nourishing it with the living tides of her own breasts. It would be every whit as unwarrantable accordingly to conceive of religion and science *creating* the mind — conferring its rational unity or individuality — as it would be to conceive of the father and mother creating the child, or conferring upon it its characteristic spiritual individuality.

Thus in familiarizing us as she does with the conception and application of cause, science is to be viewed only as enlarging our mental horizon, as developing our intellectual fibre, and strengthening its muscle, rather than as imparting to us any literal information. She brings us up to the very threshold of life, but she gives us no glimpse within its shining portals. When she says cause she does not pretend to acquaint us with any positive quantity so designated: in other words she does not tell us where or what cause substantially is, but only what and

where it is not. She says: "the substance of that life which all existence reveals is not in existence itself, is not in nature;" and hence by implication she drives us out of nature to discover it: but only by implication. Her exclusive field is that of organization, all whose fleeting phenomena she is bound to coördinate and harmonize under the guiding light of reason. She has no single authentic syllable to utter about spiritual existence. Her sole business in life is to assert the universal relativity which underlies all finite existence, thereby no doubt unconsciously and implicitly avouching the Absolute and Infinite. But if she attempt to deal explicitly with these latter quantities, she betrays her instant and vulgar incompetency, either: 1. by confounding them with the totality of space and time, which is the greatest possible potentialization of the finite and relative; or else: 2. by converting the Absolute and Infinite, as Sir William Hamilton with consummate assurance has attempted to do, from spiritual substances in themselves and therefore valid intellectual cognitions on our part, into mere shadows of our irreversible mental imbecility.

But what evidence do we want beyond that of Mr. Mill himself in order to prove that the scientific use of the word cause vacates it of philosophic import, empties it of that spiritual significance which it has to the common mind of the race, by making it so far forth as it is predicated strictly negatory of spiritual creation, and affirmative of mere natural constitution in-

stead? Had the fact been otherwise, would Mr. Mill have felt himself compelled to resort to the bewildered jargon of bewildered metaphysicians, in order to justify his own most unphilosophic procedure in the premises? "When, in this inquiry," he says, "I speak of the cause of any phenomenon, I do not mean a cause which is not itself a phenomenon; I make no research into the ultimate or ontological cause of anything. To adopt a distinction familiar in the writings of the Scotch metaphysicians, especially of Reid, the causes with which I concern myself are not efficient but physical causes."[1]

What does the mind know of these artificialities? What does the mind know of causes which are "inefficient," or do nothing? The mind has no conception of cause but as revealing power, and personal power too moreover. And it laughs a laugh of bitter derision over the efforts of distressed metaphysicians to put off their own imbecility upon itself. Granted that you cannot find cause in nature, in the only sense in which the universal mind of man apprehends it, why not manfully acknowledge the fact? For this is precisely what the mind would have you to do. Why go about to split cause up into a heap of meanings, which the unsophisticated common sense of mankind utterly disavows: if not to shield your own incapacity to discover where the only true cause of things lies? If there is but one honest Richmond in

[1] *System of Logic* (Harper's reprint), p. 196.

the field, why conjure up this host of spurious ones, except to mislead pursuit and so secure for yourself a temporary reputation of success? "The cause then, philosophically speaking," says Mr. Mill, "is the sum total of the conditions positive and negative taken together; the whole of the contingencies of every description which being realized, the consequent invariably follows."[1] But what a caricature of our conception of cause this is! "The sum total of all the conditions positive and negative" of a natural effect, is all simply the universe of nature. Does Mr. Mill really believe that when "philosophically speaking," as he says, I ask the cause of any specific phenomenon, I should not be revolted if any one replied "the universe"? How is it then that he allows his fine sense to be so trifled with?

The cause "philosophically speaking" of no effect in nature is to be found in its constitutional conditions. Comte is perfectly right so far in relegating cause out of nature. How should the research of cause educate my intellect, what intellectual help of any sort would it bring me, to know all the causes of all the effects in the universe, if cause had the restricted meaning which Mr. Mill assigns it? Such knowledge might furnish my memory, and be of use to me in the arts, I admit: but how does it empower my intellect to discern the absolute being of things, which alone is the quest of Philosophy? For example, a man falls, as Mr. Mill says, from

[1] *System of Logic*, p. 200.

a ladder. Here is a natural effect: what is the cause of it? Why, replies a bystander, the man's foot slipped, and down he came. Aye, exclaims another, but what caused his foot to slip? Why, replies a third person, the ladder stood uneven. But what, demands a fourth, caused the ladder to be put up in that insecure way? You see each of these alleged causes declares itself no cause, in appealing to something higher that lies behind it. Another bystander moreover is heard to say that the main cause of the calamity was doubtless the man's own carelessness, as he had often been observed ascending and descending the ladder in the most foolhardy manner, without taking hold of the sides. Another insists that in addition to all these reputed causes, a sudden flaw of wind lifted the poor fellow's hat, and by thus violently wrenching his attention from his heels to his head, contrived to precipitate him to the ground. And so on and so on, until at last some one arrives greatly more pompous but not a whit more philosophic than the rest, and adjourns the debate by declaring that the man fell solely in obedience to the law of gravitation, which law accordingly is the real cause of the disaster.

Now all these alleged causes of the phenomenon in question, supposing them all to be literally exact, obviously add nothing to our intellectual resources, or fail to suggest any real cause of the disaster, inasmuch as they are all alike included in it, all alike given in the problem to be solved. They are all of them only so many

more or less pronounced features, so many more or less remote particulars of the disaster, so many more or less palpable constituents of the man's fall; and cannot be accepted therefore as a philosophic explanation of it. You take for granted whenever a man falls down, that he is struck with apoplexy, or that his foot tripped or slipped or something of that sort, and that his body meanwhile was amenable to the law of gravitation; and if the cause of the man's fall, philosophically viewed, consisted in such idle particulars, one might know all the causes of all the effects in nature, and be none the wiser for the knowledge: but on the contrary a good deal poorer, inasmuch as pedantry, which is useless knowledge, hinders our intellectual development rather than helps it. If the question of cause were to be exhausted by heaping up these trivial and insignificant particulars; that is, by finding out this that and every other natural antecedent and coefficient of a natural effect: who would care to pursue it? And how many myriads of years would it take to nourish the mind up to its proper philosophic stature, if these and such like scientific crumbs furnished its only diet?

Cause, philosophically viewed, invariably interprets itself into creation. What the philosopher sees in our demand of cause is merely an intellectual instinct impelling us to feel after, if haply we may find, the true source of our being. The instinct may be duped for a long time; it may come to persuade itself at length as in

Comte Sir William Hamilton John Stuart Mill and other of our philosophic notabilities, that it is after all only seeking to know not what creates or gives absolute being to things, but only what constitutes them or gives them phenomenal body. But this is a temporary obscuration. Philosophy, like Him to whom alone it points, has no respect of persons. It may please these gentlemen to stultify themselves and their followers; but they cannot stultify Philosophy. She sees that nothing can be more childish than to seek the cause (properly so called) of any effect upon the same level with the effect itself. Wisdom is never going to be wooed in that abject way. Nature disowns her own origination; does not even know her own source. Nothing in nature exists from itself, but everything from something higher than itself. No natural effect ever owns a natural cause. No matter how trifling and inconsiderable the effect may be, it invariably demands a spiritual cause, a supernatural origin, and refuses to be dealt with on any lower terms.

Thus whenever I ask as a philosopher the cause of any effect, I have not the least desire to know what constitutes it or gives it visible body: science tells me all about that: I simply seek to know what creates it or gives it invisible spiritual being. If with Sir William Hamilton you should take some fact of existence, say a beaver hat, and apply the causal judgment to it, you would not as a philosopher seek to know what gives the hat mere body or visible exist-

ence: for the hatter on the one hand and the beaver on the other shed all the light you require on that topic: you ask exclusively what gives the hat being. You as a philosopher are perfectly indifferent to its material constitution or visible existence. What you seek to discover is its spiritual being, or that thing which makes its material constitution, its visible existence, necessary. It is with you a question altogether about that invisible soul or substance of the hat which makes it exist in the nature of things, and calls for the existence of the beaver and the skill of the hatter in order to embody it. The question of cause rightly regarded opens up to the philosophic mind the largest realm of knowledge, the spiritual realm, the realm of soul, of use, of power; and utterly disdains the merely material realm, the realm of body, of inertia, of death. Thus to know philosophically the cause of the man's fall from the ladder, you must look entirely away from this nether realm of nature, beyond the uttermost sweep of the law of gravitation, where no wind blows rude enough to jostle the jauntiest hat that ever sat upon a human head, and where no foot of any frolicsome Paddy ever fails upon any ladder which it has the least business to mount or dismount. In short you must look to the inner or spiritual world, the world of mind, which is the world of true cause, because it is the world of true life or being, where every man dwells positively or negatively in intimate and indissoluble spiritual

unison with the Divine spirit, which is ceaselessly shaping him to the image of its own perfect power and bliss.

Let me here briefly sum up all I have discursively said upon the subject of the causal judgment, and so have done with it.

The conception of cause is strictly ancillary to that of creation; just as religion and science which familiarize us with the former conception, are themselves strictly ancillary to Philosophy which deals exclusively with the latter conception. Religion and science inaugurate Philosophy: the one by affording her that sensuous base, the other that rational superstructure, of intelligence, which she herself fuses into the unity of a living temple, irradiated by infinite Goodness and Truth. Religion affirms the finite alone, the fixed, the unchangeable, the dead, as given in sense: so making the relation of God to the soul altogether outward and physical, and investing us with a responsibility towards Him so direct and literal as to be utterly crushing and death-dealing. Science affirms the relative alone, the unfixed or conditioned, as given in reason: so making God's attitude to the soul moral or contingent, as determined by the relations we individually put ourselves under with respect to other men. These divided aspects of one and the same verity are inflamed by so wholesome a reciprocal animosity, as to force the mind at last to demand their pacification in some superior third form of Truth, which shall exhaust them both by more than

satisfying them both: that is, by even glorifying them.

Philosophy is this superior and reconciling form of Truth. She neither inflames finite against relative, nor relative against finite; she affirms neither religion alone nor science alone, neither sense alone nor reason alone; but sense and reason, finite and relative, religion and science, both together one and indissoluble in the unity of a new or regenerate mind of the race. Philosophy dares not with religion affirm God alone; nor with science dares she affirm man alone; she says neither infinite by itself nor finite by itself; neither absolute by itself nor relative by itself; but both alike blent in living and undistinguishable unity: so practically reproducing the great Christian verity of the LORD or God-Man who alone is, and alone explicates every fact of existence and every event of history.

Now the mental judgment which we designate causation bears to the perfected stature of our intelligence, which is its spiritual acknowledgment of God in human nature, a precisely similar relation of subserviency to that I have just pictured. The judgment in question involves two elements, one fixed, stationary, identical with itself, namely, Nature: the other shifting, various, progressive, namely, History. Cause discriminates between these antagonist elements, between the fixed dead fact of things, and the unfixed living Truth: but it affirms neither against the other. It says neither finite by itself,

nor phenomenal by itself; neither death alone nor life alone; but both together one and indissoluble in some third term which shall placate them both and glorify them both in its own commanding universality. By this discipline the intellect becomes disengaged from sense, becomes put upon its proper feet, or quickened to discern that highest or universal form of life to which all nature and all history, or all that is fixed and all that is phenomenal in existence — all that is dead and all that is living — is alike ministerial and submissive. The intellect easily perceives this universal form both of nature and history to be human; but the human form, though it possess in its morality a fixed basis of distinction from and superiority to all lower forms of life, is yet within that basis so infinitely diversified or individualized, as obviously to postulate for itself a still superior creative unity, a distinctively Divine substance indeed, which reason is all too gross to apprehend, and which Revelation alone consequently is competent to avouch.

Of course the mere devotee of science labors assiduously to purge cause of this supernatural implication, or else to do away with it altogether. He wants nothing so much as to be able to account for nature on her own principles, on grounds level, if not to sense, at least to reason; and so disabuse the mind of those bewildering suggestions of the Infinite and Absolute which are the stumbling blocks of science, because they teach it humility. And the way

he takes to do this, is by degrading cause from a strictly scientific or educative function into a strictly sensuous or demonstrative one, in converting it from a purely intellectual instinct in us, the germ of all our subsequent spiritual efflorescence, into a pedantic literal indication of the constitutional elements which enter into any specific phenomenon. But all this labor is very puny: for though it may gratify an irritable egotism or an audacious vanity, here and there, to confound life with existence — or to sink spiritual creation into mere natural constitution — by making the changes which occur in existing things strictly incidental to the things themselves rather than accidental: yet we can no more expect on the whole to perturb the deep serene sources of human belief, by thus muddling our own little derivative streams, than we can expect to exhaust the overhanging atmosphere of its oxygen or rob the untarnished heavens of their blue, merely by fouling the air of our private dormitories.

Let us now return to Kant, whose preposterous discrimination between phenomenal and noumenal existence, or "things as they appear" and "as they are in themselves," led us to this long and I hope not unprofitable discussion. The creative substance of things, what causes them to be or confers their noumenal quality upon them, inhered, Kant thought, in the things-themselves; just as Sir William Hamilton conceives that the creative substance of saltpetre, or what makes saltpetre be, inheres in its physical

constitution: but as Kant saw no trace of creation in nature, and as nothing in nature was willing to confess itself self-made, he concluded that the natural world was a strictly unreal one, and referred the real one, if any such there were, to the untravelled and indeed undiscovered depths of our own extraordinary *nous*.

Of course Kant is inhibited by the nature of the case from dogmatizing on the subject of *noumena*. He does not pretend to affirm that they so much as exist even. He only insists that the phenomenal quality of existence affords no guarantee of its essential quality, and forbids you to infer the substance of things from their form: but as to whether or not any such essence or substance of things anywhere actually exists, he will not allow himself even an opinion. He is like a man who disputes the title-deeds of an estate in the interest not only of an unknown but of an essentially unknowable and possibly altogether imaginary tenant, and without being too sure indeed that the estate itself exists *in rerum naturâ:* all he is sure of being, that if the estate itself be not an imaginary quantity, and if there be any legitimate title to it, such title cannot by any possibility vest in the apparent incumbent.

Don Quixote was but the faintest type of this "metaphysic wit;" for the Dulcinea he served, though she was not the lofty lady his chivalrous imagination painted her, was yet a veritable flesh and blood damsel, known and loved of all the fragrant kine at least whose distended

udders used to yield up their grateful morning and evening sacrifice to her tender priestly manipulation. But this noumenal divinity for whom Kant pants, and in whose honor he lays his logical lance in rest, is destitute of any substance whatever, even a lying substance. She is not only not a decent milkmaid, she is the most trumpery verbal abstraction ever palmed by logical impudence upon human patience, representing no valid existence nor yet the ghost of such an existence, her gaunt insensate bowels yearning with no maternal tenderness; her fleshless breasts having never heaved with one throb of wifely affection or maiden modesty.

What we have already clearly seen is, the degradation to which Kant and his followers subject our knowledge in reducing it from a spiritual function to a physical one, by taking it out of the realm of consciousness or life, and inserting it in that of mere sense or existence. For example: I see a rose. Now, says Kant, given your organization on the one side, and the rose on the other, you have in this duality all you can ever know of the experience cited. Except the experience itself: I reply. We have here all that we can know of the experience by sense or even by science, but absolutely nothing of what is known of it by consciousness or life. The natural parentage of the experience is given in this duality no doubt; but actually nothing whatever of the living experience itself. The whole materiality of the phenomenon, its reality to sense, is here exhibited,

but its entire spirituality, which is its reality to life or consciousness, is remorselessly left out. You may resolve me as a corporeal or even as a psychical existence back into the loins of my father and mother; but I have an incorporeal or spiritual existence as well which baffles chemistry and defies all rational analysis: an existence in myself or to consciousness which laughs to scorn the attribution of any finite parentage. No amount of exactest pedantry as to my physical beginnings will avail to introduce you to this great spiritual fact of individuality, of character, of personality in me, this fact of life or consciousness exclusively, which demands an infinite paternity, and is forever shut up to the unsunned privacies of my own bosom. It is precisely this inmost and sacredest life of knowledge, this utter spirituality of the phenomenon as avouched by consciousness, which Kant overlays in giving you its material genesis, or stifles under its natural pedigree; and its unhappy ghost ever after haunted his metaphysic pillow till he contrived to drug it by that timorous concession of the world "of things-in-themselves." He inventoried all the materials of the house, all that had been necessary to give the house visible existence to outside eyes: but he lisped no word of its living personality, *i. e.* of the myriad uses it promotes to those who inhabit it. In short he analyzed the dead body of knowledge after its living spirit had forsaken it; but instead of modestly calling his analysis a *post-mortem*, he had the fatuity unpardonable in

a philosopher to represent it as a portrait from life. It was as if a man in giving you the natural pedigree of a horse, should fancy that he had given you the living animal himself. No greater infatuation was ever exhibited, and nothing explains it but the puerile blindness which the cleverest men habitually betray in reference to the distinction between life and existence, between truth and fact. No incident of life or consciousness can be sensibly discerned. We may so discern it in its parentage, but never in itself; because being in itself spiritual it can only be spiritually discerned, that is livingly, or *ab intra* not *ab extra*. We may go on accordingly to investigate the mere physical investiture or material husk of our living experiences till doomsday: we shall never by that process get any nearer to the spiritual substance itself, but only the more hopelessly away from it.

Let us now draw a little nearer to our theme, and to this end let us complete our extract from the convenient and capable Schwegler. We have already been taught by Kant the parentage of knowledge: we have seen it to be the invariable issue of a congress between an active subject and a passive object, between a living mother and a dead father. Be not surprised to learn therefore, as you now are about to do on the authority of the distinguished accoucheur himself, that the progeny of this most ill-starred and unequal conjunction is in no case trustworthy, being sure in fact to turn out either an unmitigated idiot or an unmitigated liar, it scarcely

matters which, whenever you dispose yourself to place a serious dependence upon its word.

"Nevertheless we do not know things as they are in themselves. First, because the categories or forms of our understanding prevent. By bringing that which is given as the material of knowledge into our conceptions as the form, there is manifestly a change in respect to the objects, which become thought of not as they are but only as we apprehend them: they appear to us only as they are transmuted into categories. But besides this subjective addition, there is yet another. We do not know things as they are in themselves, secondly, because even the intuitions which we bring within the understanding's conceptions are not pure and uncolored, but are already penetrated by a subjective medium, *i. e.* by the universal form of all objects of sense, namely, space and time. — From this it follows, that it is only phenomena which we know and not things in themselves separated from space and time."[1]

Such, succinctly stated, was the momentous discovery on which Kant based his claim to be considered the Copernicus of a new speculative era. Preceding philosophers had made the knowing subject wear the color of the known object: "henceforth," said Kant, "let the object take the color of the subject, the thing that is known take the shape of that which knows." What has been the result to Philosophy? She has gone stark staring mad in Germany, and

[1] Schwegler, *ut ante.*

avoids that catastrophe in Scotland only by renouncing her function. That is to say, Kant's German successors, never questioning the validity of his premises, undertook a *quasi* resuscitation of the object thus contemptuously swallowed up in the subject, by making the subject objective to itself; *i. e.* they undertook to save the creator thus summarily merged in the creature, by making the creature himself evolve the creator. Sir William Hamilton starting from the same chimerical station failed to reach the same crazy terminus, only by wilfully running his locomotive off the track; that is, by postulating the radical incompetency of Philosophy to any doctrine whether of the subject or the object, whether of finite or infinite, whether of man or God: thus taking not merely the existence of the creator but that also of the philosophic creature himself off the *terra firma* of assured knowledge, and turning it into a question of blind faith or probability, a thing to be forever reasoned about, never to be definitively settled. Surely Copernicus would have had small reason to felicitate himself, could he have fancied that the seeds of truth he planted were going to produce a crop of such egregious Newtons as these! But let us make all this plain to the most cursory intelligence.

It is evident from the preceding citation, that the rectification which Kant brought to Philosophy consists mainly in a new coördination of the constitutive elements of knowledge. The disease of Philosophy, he thought, lay in the

preponderance it had hitherto allowed to the matter of knowledge over its form; and he presumed therefore that if he could correct this bad habit, and teach the philosopher to regard the matter of knowledge as rightfully determined by its form, the disease would be done away, and Philosophy be permanently set upon its legs. For example: I see a rose. "Now," says Kant, "there are two generative elements in this perception: 1. the seer, 2. the seen; or you the subject of the perception, and the rose its object: and of these two elements the latter has hitherto regulated the former, so that men have come to entertain no doubt that the rose is an absolute existence, possessing color fragrance dimension etc. in itself, and quite independently of our perception. Yet the truth of the case is directly the reverse of this. It is the form of our knowledge which rightfully regulates its matter, the subjective element which properly determines the objective element; the consequence being that the rose as we perceive it has no absolute but only a phenomenal or relative quality, absolute existence being unknown and unknowable. And so, forth, throughout all the range of our faculties sensitive and rational: we know only phenomena, that is to say, things colored by the forms of our understanding and the ideas of our reason: we never know noumena, that is, things themselves as they are in themselves, and unaffected by our subjectivity. Let Philosophy then concede at once that we never can have a sure knowledge of any existence infinite or

finite: in a word, the search after absolute certainty in any sphere physical or metaphysical, in reference either to God or man, to heaven or earth, is in the very nature of things illusory, and must be abandoned."

The reader perceives at a glance that this was making a very clean thing of it, so far as the vocation of Philosophy was concerned. For Philosophy has really no other business in life than to point out the Absolute in knowledge, *i. e.* to possess itself of the realm of substance, of that which spiritually creates or gives being to all these fleeting material things: and if therefore you can persuade the philosopher that so far from knowing the substance of things he does not even know things themselves, but only some fallacious semblance of things, you of course cover his pursuit with confusion, and exalt scepticism to the crown of human knowledge. Philosophy is nothing, if it be not a recognition of the Infinite in the finite, of the Absolute in the relative; and if therefore you eliminate the finite and the relative from knowledge, you *à fortiori* vacate the infinite and absolute, and so reduce Philosophy, with Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, on the one hand, into a rabid glorification of our natural Egotism; or else, with Sir William Hamilton on the other, into the protracted howl of man's inveterate impotence and despair. All these men alike look upon Kant's analysis of knowledge as final, apparently without giving themselves the trouble to scrutinize it: only the

three former, with that everlasting boyishness into which an excess of imagination betrays the speculative intellect of their country, unhappily saw in it the material for endless oceans of soap-suds, and began at once to amuse the world, in the intervals of smoking, by blowing out of their long tobacco-pipes a series of captivating bubbles, each more airy and evanescent, each more attenuate and fantastic, than its glittering brother: while the latter obeying the bent of his national genius, of his more orthodox logical culture, regarded it as an unexpected tribute in the intellectual sphere to the old Calvinistic tradition of Solifidianism, and at once gave himself so whining an utterance and a demeanor so demure and mortified, as could not fail to be very edifying, if they were not in the eyes of Philosophy exquisitely misplaced and ridiculous.

But the question is not so much about the consequences of Kant's speculations, as about their rectitude. Was he right or was he wrong? This is the only question we are called to discuss; and I for my part do not hesitate to profess my hearty conviction that he was consummately wrong, wrong from top to bottom, wrong through and through, in short all wrong. If now I can only succeed in imparting the grounds of my conviction to my reader's apprehension, I shall then not only have vacated the entire base of that delirious Pantheistic architecture which since Kant's time and in Biblical phrase "*has stretched out the line of confusion*

and the stones of emptiness" over the whole of philosophic Germany, but I shall also have done something to indicate a realm of certainty in knowledge which shall be as secure to the highest intellect as to the humblest, since it is completely independent both of our wisdom and of our will.[1]

[1] See Appendix, Note G.

CHAPTER XX.

I HAVE said that Philosophy is most strictly a research of the Infinite in the finite, of the Absolute in the relative. It is either this, or it is demonstrably nothing at all; because we know only the finite and relative, and consequently (unless we make knowledge contradict itself, which is absurd) we can never know the Infinite and absolute save in so far as they become disclosed or revealed in the finite and relative. The Infinite and Absolute are what we are naturally ignorant of, because, being by nature finite or relative existences, our knowledge must of course reflect that imperfection, and confess itself unable to ascend to the Perfect. Unless the Perfect therefore condescend to our disability by revealing Himself in what we already know, *i. e.* in the imperfect, we must remain forever excluded from His knowledge. I repeat then that Philosophy is a demonstration of the Infinite and Absolute, not apart from the finite and relative, but exclusively by means of them. She rejects every other definition than this as manifestly incommensurate with her interests; whereas this position being once made good to her she is put upon an inexpugnable basis forever. Her sole business in life is to

vindicate the eternal mystery of godliness, which is God manifest in the flesh; or what is the same thing, the perfect marriage-fusion of the Divine and human natures in a new or regenerate manhood: a business to which the purely religious and the purely scientific intellect are both alike profoundly incompetent; the former from its inveterate superstition, the latter from its equally inveterate scepticism: the one being sure if unimpeded by the other to originate an incessant practical Pantheism; the other an incessant practical Atheism.

Now the fundamental incompetency of the Critical Philosophy avouches itself just here, in that it totally misapprehends this tie of reciprocal amity and unity between God and Man, infinite and finite, absolute and relative, and converts it into one of reciprocal distrust and aversion. It construes the infinite not as the friend but as the impassioned enemy of the finite; and postulates not merely a logical but an essential contrariety between the absolute and the relative in knowledge. Kant shows correctly enough that all our vital experience involves or presupposes a close relationship between our organization and the external world; but he instantly forgets that this is a fact strictly of involution, and not of evolution — of presupposition and no longer of supposition — and proceeds consequently to dogmatize upon the experience as if it were exhausted in that relationship.

The idea is simply absurd. The experience

does not begin until the relationship in question is fully consummated. The relationship invariably precedes the experience, is rigidly presupposed by it in every case; and hence has simply no power whatever to determine the experience, but only to serve or promote it: no power rationally to explain or elucidate it, but only to afford it a material platform of evolution. It was a dim instinct of the truth here which alarmed Kant: a ghastly dread lest—if the living experience ITSELF should be seen in every case to involve an absolute quantity—Philosophy might suddenly and superbly authenticate both science and religion: that made him hurry the experience itself breathlessly out of sight, by seeking to dissolve the substantial unity it implies to consciousness in the purely superficial and structural diversity it yields to sense. It is as if being asked to define a house to your imagination, he should reply: so much bricks and mortar on the one hand, so much architect on the other: or being asked to describe a child he should content himself with introducing you to its father and mother. Surely, you say, the house itself is neither the materials nor the scientific skill which were necessary to generate it, being wholly contained in the active USE it promotes to its occupants; and the child himself, or spiritually, is utterly incapable of being resolved into the loins of his parents, however truly he may be demonstrated to have come from them in all corporeal and even psychical regards. Spiritually he never came from them, but claims on

the contrary an instantly Divine origin. Kant's replies might pass, if your questions had turned upon the mere material genesis of either product: but as this knowledge was rigidly presupposed in your inquiry, nothing being supposed unknown but the quality of the house itself considered as a finished structure, and of the child himself considered as a living person, they are simply puerile and irrelevant.

Let me be perfectly understood. I repeat that the reason why Kant was thus persistently driven to blink the solar splendor of Life, and immerse his intelligence in the comparative night of mere Existence: the reason why it was necessary for him to render our living experience thus preposterously exanimate by exorcising from it its total individuality as ascertained by consciousness, before he would consent to account for it: is because Philosophy in his degenerate hands had renounced all memory of her true mission. A true Philosophy whenever confronted with this grand fact of selfhood, this supreme fact of life or consciousness, cannot help feeling herself on hallowed ground; cannot help feeling herself in the presence, veiled it is true but still most vital, of the Infinite and Absolute: and it is a rare philosopher as philosophers have hitherto been estimated, who is not utterly disconcerted by the apparition. Kant at all events was not that philosopher. He was in fact less a philosopher than a man of science, his intellect being far more eminently analytic than synthetic. He lent himself with extreme good will to

the scientific demolition of religion as a doctrine; but he had no foresight whatever of its philosophic reconstruction as a life. He had no objection to exalt the purely negative scientific research of cause into a positive utterance of Philosophy; but when as here he found it bringing him face to face with the infinitely more august because truly philosophic problem of creation, he felt an instant instinct of disaster to all those cherished interests of scepticism by which his intellectual vision was bounded, and without more ado accordingly he gathered up his coat-tails and fled ignominiously to the uttermost parts of the earth.

I am persuaded that it was nothing but this mortal dread of Philosophy as the sole authoritative voucher and exponent of the Divine creation, which, unconsciously to Kant himself, aroused his scientific scepticism and drove him to interpret all our experience as a compromise between our subjectivity on the one hand and the truth of things on the other. Surely if I am willing to look upon phenomenal existence as created: if I am willing to perceive in it the evidence of a power superior to itself as alone accounting for it: I shall never feel tempted to postulate for it an existence more real than appears. If the phenomenon be a created existence, its phenomenal selfhood is plainly its only real selfhood, the only one which does not manifestly belie the truth of the case. Accordingly it is only when I put the truth of its creation in doubt, or claim for it an underived existence,

that I feel myself tempted to separate between its apparent and its real selfhood, or posit for it a mode of existence which is as truly repudiated by its own consciousness as by my intelligence. Thus had Kant been willing to accept the vulgar hypothesis of a supernatural creation, he would have seen with half a glance that of no created thing could it be asserted with truth that it was its own substance as well as its own form; and hence he would never have organized that monstrous basis of disagreement between Philosophy and the common sense of mankind, which was afterwards in the writings of his German and Scotch disciples to avouch their reciprocal deadly hostility, by turning Philosophy, whether it be regarded with the former as a positive doctrine, or with the latter as a purely negative one, into the most flagrant outrage upon common sense ever planned, at all events ever practised, by human wit and human learning.

The common sense of mankind affirms with no misgiving that every thing we see is created by God, that absolutely everything which exists does in some infallible way confess His exclusive power. No doubt the common sense of the race begets very crude very superstitious very unworthy conceptions of this great theme, and as a general thing degrades the creative process from a purely spiritual to a purely physical and even mechanical one. For this reason the philosopher has been from time immemorial very shy of the vulgar conclusions upon the

subject: but Philosophy herself has never demanded that these conclusions should be ignored, but only that the popular conceptions should be chastened and elevated. Least of all has she ever been willing to sink the idea of spiritual creation in the purely scientific and preparatory notion of material constitution. She equally disavows the ancient philosopher who sought to run creation into a scheme of physical order; and the modern philosopher who seeks to run it into one of logical order: because they both alike deny creation in any intelligible sense of the word, and so vacate Philosophy as a substantive vocation by attempting both alike to account for existing things on scientific principles, or without the allegation of spiritual substance. The modern philosopher especially has drunk of the new wine of science till he has become foolishly inebriated and lost the remembrance of higher worlds; till he is no longer ashamed in fact to maintain that what we popularly term creation and conceive of as the exhibition of strictly supernatural power, is in truth but the carnal interpretation of a profound logical verity, which is eventually sure to come into general recognition by the normal progress of science, and without the misleading light of Revelation. It is this contented and inveterate myopy of Philosophy which turns her into the toothless ineffectual crone she confesses herself to be in the pages of Kant and Sir William Hamilton; fit only to sit in the chimney-corner and

doze over the golden memories of her prime, while the great problems of Creation Redemption and Providence are not only left unsolved but are authoritatively pronounced insoluble. Kant indeed allows these questions a *quasi* philosophic interest in reducing them to so many unrecognized anticipations of natural order. But Sir William Hamilton frankly disowns them altogether as being completely foreign to the jurisdiction of Philosophy, so consigning us to the tender mercies of an irresponsible priesthood on the one hand, and of an unlimited scepticism on the other.

But let us endeavor to be more precise. Kant's philosophic delinquency grew as I have already shown out of a defective scientific observation, which led him to exteriorate the objective to the subjective element in experience, or give the latter systematic priority and control of the former. The fundamental antithesis which all thought and all action exhibit, of subject and object, of me and not-me, properly falls, not between man and nature, *i. e.* finite and finite, but between man and God, *i. e.* finite and infinite. The senses do indeed authorize and validly assert this discrimination between man and nature: but then we must remember that sense regards man as a natural phenomenon or product exclusively, having no capacity to discern him in his spiritual nature and attributes. So far the testimony of sense is irrefutable. To all the extent of my physical manhood I am properly subject to nature.

I breathe her atmospheres, I eat of her corn and her oil, I drink of her wine and her milk; her light organizes my eye, her sounds animate my ear, her odors quicken my smell, her savors vivify my palate, her forms enliven my touch: in a word her various forces constitute the sole and total field of my bodily sensibility and intelligence, so that to all the extent of my finite organization I am literally built up of her substance, and propose to myself no higher end or object of action because I recognize no surer spring nor ampler provision of life. But Philosophy rejects these natural *data* as furnishing an every way base and meagre estimate of true manhood, and proceeds at once to assign it worthier dimensions. Philosophy makes the characteristic sphere of human life to be spiritual, and is manifestly therefore in no danger of yielding to sense in regarding man as primarily a subject of nature. But science also ought to be above any such temptation, inasmuch as she herself makes morality the true characteristic of human nature, so endowing man with an individuality unknown to all earth's tribes, and insuring him the unlimited dominion of nature. She thus most distinctly reverses the order which sense establishes between man and nature. For man as a moral force renounces his obligation to nature, compelling her fiercest appetites and passions into his individual subserviency: so that throughout the moral realm nature invariably posits herself as properly subject to man, or defers to him as her own legitimate and ade-

quate sovereign. What else explains our rational growth? How else is it that we alone reject the light of sense as competent for our guidance, and substitute for it the more subtle and penetrating flame of reason in all our conclusions?

Clearly then Kant was as treacherous to science as he was to Philosophy, as disloyal to reason as he was to Revelation, in making the objective sphere of human life fall outside of man's subjectivity or below it, rather than within or above it. He systematically identified the realm of the not-me with nature instead of God: or if he allowed it any pertinency to the latter designation, it could only be by divesting God meanwhile of every spiritual attribute, and postulating Him as a purely natural existence separated from man by the totality of space and time, or the integrality of nature. It is as instructive as it is melancholy to observe how the whole current of subsequent philosophic, or rather logical, speculation in Germany reflected the unhappy scientific bias Kant had thus impressed upon it, by hastening to precipitate itself into the fatal embraces of Pantheism. For of course if, not negligently but on principle, you exteriorate object to subject, being to seeming, substance to form, you necessarily exalt the minor element of thought to the unchallenged primacy of its major element, and consequently end by identifying man with Deity. Fichte accordingly in accepting without examination the Kantian analysis of knowledge, found him-

self logically driven to interpret Philosophy as a scheme of absolute subjective Idealism, in declaring the me the sole and universal reality. Pantheism was only impossible on this meagre stoical basis, because God himself according to Fichte is but a creature of the me. It was not that the system fell short of God, but exceeded Him, or absorbed Him in its own ampler contents. Pantheism, according to this stupendous tom-foolery, supplies an imperfect theory of the universe, only because God Himself falls short of the universality of the me: *i. e.* cannot pretend, in vulgar parlance, to be near so great a swell. Schelling transformed Fichte's subjective scheme into one of objective idealism, without in the least degree arraigning, or even suspecting, the egregious scientific blunder or fallacy of observation on which it was based. In fact Schelling merely affirmed in contradiction to Fichte the coreality of subject and object, or man and nature: the affirmation being just as barren of philosophic consequences strictly speaking as its predecessor had been; since its author had no sooner vindicated the joint and equal scientific validity of subject and object or of man and nature, than he at once proceeded to demonstrate their joint and equal philosophic invalidity, by resolving them both into an inconceivable transcendental identity or indifference, which, instead of vivifying them both, simply obliterates or neutralizes them both; and which he thereupon calls The Absolute; in fact the head of that distinguished family of Absolutes of whom

Sheridan's Sir Anthony was a diminished specimen. Thus it was however that Schelling laboriously cleared the way for that unscrupulous juggle of "the identity of contradictories" — *i. e.* the identity of yes and no, white and black, true and false, good and evil, right and wrong — which was soon in the hands of a hardier thaumaturgist to arrest the intellectual progress, and even undo the intellectual existence, of the race; not merely by confounding God with the universe and proving creation in any sincere sense of the term an abject swindle: for all this had been already gleefully accomplished by Schelling: but by converting our very faculty of knowledge itself upon which we fondly relied to give us eternal conjunction with God, into a faculty of unlimited self-deception merely: *i. e.* into a guarantee of our eternal and most righteous incorporation in the devil.

But we have by no means done with Kant.

What I want to bring my reader clearly to see in the end, is, that Kant's analysis of knowledge vitiates the integrity of the mind or destroys its unity, simply by making consciousness reproduce — instead of annul — the fallacious separation which sense organizes between man and nature. To Kant's senses he himself existed within the visible limits of his own body; nature existed without those limits; and God existed (if indeed any such existence were) still without the limits of nature. This is all very harmless and inevitable. The foundations of the mind are laid in sense, and he who quarrels

with them because they are directly fallacious and only inversely true, forgets that the foundation of every edifice physical or mental would be plainly inadequate to its function, unless what was ceiling to itself became floor to the superstructure; or what was heaven to the one became earth to the other. So far then Kant is blameless.

But Kant instantly ceases to be blameless when he proceeds to reproduce this necessity of the foundation in the freedom of the superstructure itself, by reorganizing sense in the outraged lineaments of consciousness. Sense divides where consciousness unites; and to represent the one therefore as simply reflecting the verdict of the other, is virtually to stop the growth of the mind and fix it in infancy. Physically, or to my own senses and those of other men, I exist in one place and nature in another. But mentally or to my own rational consciousness I am consubstantiate and coextensive with nature in all time and all space, having no life but what she imparts. She supplies every sensation every emotion every perception I experience; in short my sensibility and intelligence are completely filled out and vivified with her substance, so that a conscious unity reigns where sense records only a lifeless duality. Descartes made thought the argument of existence. *Cogito, ergo sum.* Yes, but this reasoning avails to nature quite as much as to myself; since thought is always concrete never abstract, *i. e.* presents me and nature in indissoluble unity. Thought is always com-

posite never simple; a product of marriage not of concubinage; in short a fact of most orderly relation and therefore of unity between two sensibly divided existences, never of mere disorderly finiteness and disunion. "I THINK," says Descartes. "But *what* do you think?" I reply. "You cannot think nothing. If you think, you are bound to think something: which something is furnished you either 1, by nature directly; or 2, by God as imagined by you under natural attributes; or else 3, by yourself as similarly imagined: so that nature may be said to furnish directly or indirectly the whole substance or body of your thought, while you yourself give it mere visible surface or cuticle. Thus you may think things which are directly presented in sense, such as stones or trees or horses or houses or lands or waters: or you may think things which are only indirectly presented there, *i. e.* re-presented; namely rational things, such as goodness and truth, evil and falsity, simplicity and deceit, magnanimity and meanness, pride and humility, chastity and uncleanness: but whether you think one or the other, the process of your thought is invariably concrete not discrete, and forbids you accordingly to allege within its own living or conscious limits the distribution of object and subject, or the duality of nature and man."

Now Kant, practically at least, ignored this all-important truth, in persistently separating between the subject and object of knowledge, or in representing knowledge not as evidencing a mental unity in the midst of a physical diversity,

but as organizing a most real and substantial diversity where sense ordains only a seeming and formal one. I have no doubt for my own part that he also theoretically ignored the truth of the case; for although he in terms acknowledges nature as contributing the matter of knowledge while we contribute only its form, he yet organizes such a controversy between these livingly united elements, as plainly proves that he for his part conceives that puny and pedantic reflex of the truth upon his understanding, to be the vital truth itself: thus reducing knowledge from a purely synthetic to a purely analytic function, or swamping consciousness, which affirms both infinite and finite, both absolute and relative, in sense, which affirms only the finite and relative. In short Kant regarded the mind as strictly an individual possession, and never suspected its universal scientific unity. He looked upon his own mind as shut up spatially to his corporeal limits, so that he as a mental subject not less than a physical one might be said to exist in time and space, or claim to be only here and now while nature was everywhere and always. He had not the remotest idea that nature reflects the united and entire mental personality of the race, and that he himself consequently had no mind apart from nature: on the contrary he maintained that we by the forms of our sensibility and understanding furnished the entire personality of nature, and consequently viewed himself as absolutely, or within the spatial dimensions of his body, a seeing, hearing, smell-

ing, tasting, and touching, in short, knowing, subject; and then as simply applying these absolute faculties to natural things.

Perhaps we may illustrate Kant's philosophic insolvency more succinctly to the reader's apprehension by saying, that he conceived the finite and relative to be one and the same existence, or at all events looked upon the latter as bearing a direct and not an inverse ratio to the former. His habitual though no doubt inconsiderate identification of science whose testimony is wholly of the relative, with sense whose witness is wholly of the finite, warrants us perfectly to say that such practically at least was his error. And no error can be more disastrous to Philosophy, since it vacates the only basis to which Philosophy may lay claim, namely, the distinctively scientific evolution of the human mind. Existence or the finite is given in sense, and in sense alone. Life or the relative is given in consciousness, and consciousness alone. Existence is presupposed in life, the finite is presupposed in the relative, just as sense is presupposed in consciousness: and for that very reason there can be no direct but only an inverse accord between them, precisely like that which exists between a house and its foundation, or between substance and shadow. Science accordingly, as concerned only with the higher phenomenon of life or the relative, takes existence or the finite for granted; using the materials which sense supplies without the least distrust of their absoluteness. But let sense beware how she presumes upon this good-

natured attitude of science! Let her take good heed lest she desert her own humble province, which is that of attesting the finite exclusively, and assume on that experience to attest the relative as well! For science in that case must instantly pronounce her a false witness. Sense is perfectly competent to attest facts of simple or disunited existence, facts of body in other words: and within all this range consequently her testimony is absolute over all but metaphysicians and madmen. But the moment she attempts to suggest a fact of life or soul, which is a composite fact, a fact of relation and therefore of order, she makes herself simply ridiculous. She reveals to us sun moon and stars existing each in visible contrast or oppugnancy to the others; but if she goes on to allege the scientific order which nevertheless binds these discordant bodies in the unity of a pervasive soul or life, she is sure to turn the truth literally and exactly upside down.

Now Kant was practically indifferent to this all-important mental hierarchy. He thought that the relative as well as the finite — facts of logical ratio or order as well as facts of palpable existence or body — were given in sense; thus that the analogy of one to the other was always direct never inversive: and he consequently plunged — drawing the unsuspecting and even jubilant Sir William after him — into a tipsy scientific imbroglio only to be rivalled by the folly of an architect, who, fancying a house to be a mere extension of its foundation, a direct

and not an inverse projection of its base, should insist upon building it downwards instead of upwards; or by that of a pedant, who, looking upon his coat and trousers as a direct and not inverted form of his body, as a continuation and not a correspondence of his person, should insist upon wearing those astonished garments inside out. It was in fact the inveterate because unsuspected error of both of these distinguished men, as it is of all men whose attention has never been given to the subject, to confound the rational or composite in experience with the finite or simple, thus to dissolve life in mere existence, or swamp the spiritual and generative element in consciousness in its strictly material and passive constitutional conditions. They both of them saw very clearly that every fact of mere existence or physics as given in sense, involves a dual or divided parentage; that is to say, exhibits its objective element falling apparently without never within its subjective element. But they neither of them ever saw — what however is of much nearer concern to Philosophy — that every fact of life or metaphysics as given in consciousness, presents an inextinguishable fusion or unity of these previously divided elements — how? simply by operating the thorough interioration of the objective one to the subjective. Let me explain.

I perceive the rose. Here is a verbal proposition reciting a strictly unitary fact of perception, *i. e.* of life, existing only in consciousness, in language borrowed from sense. It recites a

pure fact of marriage, and therefore exclusively of relation, in terms belonging to simple unwedded existence; analyzing it back from the unity it presents in consciousness to the disjunction it exhibits in sense. Sense puts me here and the rose there: that is, it exteriorates object to subject or postpones substance to form. To my senses I exist in hopeless disunion with nature, the rose being invariably in one place and I in another; so that no possibility offers of any sensible coalition between us. And reason of course so long as it is in abeyance to the mere light of Nature, repeats the servile lesson and fills science with the echo of an eternal discord. But spiritually the truth is exactly opposite. To my living consciousness, (of course not to my memory or merely reflective one; with which Kant and Sir William Hamilton commonly confound it) I am indissolubly one with nature; the mental or metaphysical experience called sight or smell or hearing or taste or touch, being nothing but the literal consummation of a spiritual marriage between us so intimate and vital that only the absolute decease of the parties can dissolve it. Life annuls within its own limits the sensible distinction between me and nature, by bringing nature within my subjectivity or making it vivify my intelligence. I should be literally uninformed with mind or soul, which is life, unless the patent disunion enacted between me and nature by sense, gave way to the higher latent unity revealed in consciousness. Consciousness, the living consciousness, always posits

me mentally or psychically, as made up and constituted of my natural sensibilities and susceptibilities, so that in dissolving the unity between me and nature, you literally discharge me of soul or life. Every fact of mental experience accordingly blends me and nature in indissoluble unity, whatever previous disunion mere sense ordains between us; and Kant only proves his own thorough misconception of the truth, when he interprets the experience into a fact of divorce instead of marriage. The truth is that Kant merely dissects the dead body of an experience after its living or unitary soul has fled; and finding naturally enough no evidence there of the marriage which life alone constitutes, he makes the tie between man and nature to have been one of dry and hopeless celibacy on both sides; or if he permits it to be spiritually prolific in any case it is only *par amours* and never by any inwardly authenticated nuptials. In this poor pedantic way, fumbling within the disorganized carcass of an experience to catch the perished odor of its life, Kant and Sir William Hamilton succeeded at last to their perfect satisfaction in reducing the man of science to a coroner, and the philosopher to an undertaker. The insufferable airs of all-sufficiency which Sir William especially puts on as he now flourishes the scalpel of the former, now wields the pickaxe and spade of the latter, while they dispel all doubt that his notions of Philosophy owed much less to his soft warm broad human heart, than to his hard cold narrow Scotch head, would be

purely ludicrous if they had not the power which all false pretension has in proportion to its audacity, to impose upon the servile imagination of scholars.

What can be more clear than that the living perception in question (my perception of the rose) does not reproduce, but on the contrary completely annuls within its own precincts the duality or distance which sense alleges between me and nature, by converting it into an inextinguishable mental unity? Life to be sure does not war with existence, consciousness with sense. The former merely unites what the latter divides. Such is the perpetual miracle of life reflected in consciousness. Existence as given in sense makes nature fall without my subjectivity, so impoverishing me by all her wealth. Life on the other hand as given in consciousness reverses this ungenerous decree, or presents nature so intimately fused and blent with myself that it is no longer possible for me consciously to discriminate between us, both of us in fact becoming indissolubly married in what is called my mind or intelligence, *i. e.* my mental personality. Life and mind are convertible terms. Science brings all nature within the realm of mind, or stamps it with the unity of a man. What we call the laws of Nature are in truth projections of our own mind exclusively, claiming an objective validity to us individually only because the mental unity they express is that of the race and not of the individual. When the

man of science attributes certain facts of nature to what he calls the influence of gravitation, he has or should have no intention to intimate that there is any such thing in nature, any such substance or entity, as gravitation. The word marks a mere mental generalization on our part of certain widely diffused and various facts of experience, the generalization itself being only an instinctive effort of the common or associate mind of the race to indue itself, by the instrumentality of the individual mind, with that perfect scientific form or order which shall constitute its own eventual and permanent self-consciousness. All these generalizations of our natural experience are only so many approximations, on the part of the common mind of the race, to the recognition of its own universality and unity. Nature is but the spiritual man turned inside out, or the contents of his otherwise unknown and unimaginable spiritual personality revealed to his senses. It is not a substance, but the shadow of a substance whose reality is altogether spiritual. Yet when you see the energy with which our so-called philosophers pursue cause to its last fastness, and seek to waylay heat and take light captive in the web of their cunning devices, or bleat forth idle prayers to know what after all is electricity and what magnetism, you must inevitably infer that the living and unitary substance they seek under all these shifting forms, the absolute personality they demand under all

these Protean disguises, is altogether physical and not mental. Never was a grosser hallucination. The unity which underlies and animates all the so-called forces of nature, is exclusively human and not physical, belonging to the sphere of consciousness not of sense, being nothing more nor less than the unity of the universal human mind itself. These things are only so many flashings-forth through the chinks of sense and reason, of a great spiritual fact too subtle ever to be otherwise apprehended, namely, the unity or personality of the great race itself. They are none of them things which exist in nature: they are all of them only so many revelations or inverted images of itself which the human mind projects upon the mirror of natural fact, and by means of which it will ultimately come to a true self-consciousness; or what is the same thing, to the recognition of life as exclusively spiritual in substance, while material only in form or appearance, out of deference to the needs of our nascent intelligence. Science is only a blind instinctive groping under the flickering guidance of reason after this most human unity which subtends all the disjointed facts of existence and gives them life.[1] From the lowest or most diffused and therefore most inhuman type of life exhibited in nature which is gravitation, up to its highest or

[1] The well-meant efforts of Mr. Grove Mr. Faraday and a thousand similar conscientious men of science, to lay this ghost of a unitary or presiding natural force by which they are incessantly haunted, must prove simply abortive, so long as they look upon Nature as involving her own substance, or confessing any unity out of the human mind.

most concentrated and therefore most human type, which is spontaneity, science sees not nature but man, and consequently demands of Philosophy a metaphysics which shall no longer exclude physics, but reverently accept its slightest admonition.

CHAPTER XXI.

If the foregoing considerations be well weighed, I think the reader will not fail to agree with me, that the regulative authority which Kant claims for the subjective element in knowledge over the objective element, turns out a purely chimerical pretension; is in fact the exact opposite of the truth. For whenever and wherever the relation of object and subject befalls, the former term of the relation will always be found to claim of strictest right the prior interior and controlling place, while the latter spontaneously sinks to a secondary and subordinate one. I can hardly bring myself to believe that Kant ever exercised a deliberate scrutiny upon the mental experience in question, so little does the fact of the case justify his analysis. Thus, I perceive the rose; or I think the rose. This perception, says Kant, or this thought involves two antagonist elements: 1, you the seeing or thinking subject; and 2, the rose, which is the seen or thought object: and of these two the former rightfully controls the latter. The first of these statements as we have already seen is practically fallacious and misleading: the last is simply untrue. The former statement is fallacious, because Kant treats the

alleged involution of these antagonist elements as a fact practically of evolution; and the latter statement is untrue, because wherever the relation of object and subject is legitimately evolved, the former element invariably commands the prior interior and controlling place, while the latter spontaneously seeks a wholly secondary or subordinate one.

I. It seems hardly worth while to dwell any longer upon the former of these errors, since the reader must by this time have become convinced that no fact of life, as such, can evolve the sensible discrimination of subject and object, or man and nature; simply because it constitutionally involves such discrimination, and to evolve it therefore would be to yield up its life, or sacrifice all that is characteristic about it as distinct from mere existence. Every fact of perception or thought, *i. e.* of life, involves on its mere physical or constitutional side the sensible discrimination in question; but do you not see that if you make it go on to reproduce that discrimination metaphysically or consciously as well, you perpetually adjourn its individuality, or discharge it of life, since all conscious life or individuality proceeds upon the absolute fusion of subject and object, or man and nature? How could such reproduction take place indeed except in reflective form? For the discrimination already exists as a fact of sense: to reproduce it therefore in the higher realm of consciousness would be greatly to impoverish consciousness, by making it a mere reflection of sense. Con-

sciousness differs from sense in that it unites what the latter divides; it is in every case a marriage between things which are previously given singly in sense; so that to represent it as reproducing this sensible discrimination would be like representing marriage to consist of divorce. Sense asserts the existing difference of subject and object, or man and nature; consciousness their living unity. Life is the unity of object and subject, just as water is the unity of oxygen and hydrogen, the unity being a conjugal one in both cases. But surely conjugality does not imply but on the contrary excludes the bare conception of divorce. Divorce ensues only where conjugality ceases. If then he would be an undoubted dolt, scientifically, who should represent water as a product of the distinction between oxygen and hydrogen, water itself being the absolute fusion or indistinguishable unity of those substances: so he must be a much greater dolt, philosophically, who interprets life into the sensible discrimination of subject and object, or man and nature: for life presents a far more intense marriage of subject and object, a far more vivid and dazzling fusion of man and nature, than water can pretend to present of oxygen and hydrogen. The bare offer of such an interpretation in fact proves the offerer incompetent even to the recognition of the true problem, let alone its discussion: since it shows him deliberately reducing it from one of life to one of mere existence, or degrading it out of the realm of consciousness into that of sense.

Still let us linger upon the mistake a little longer, if by so doing I may more fully illustrate the truth upon the subject.

We have already seen that every fact of life whatever, that is, every mental experience of every kind implying the intercourse of body and soul in its subject, presupposes to that extent a marriage-fusion between object and subject so intimate or vital, that it is impossible to distribute the parties to it, or say how much of the experience is contributed by one and how much by the other. Every act of life or consciousness, just because it is the offspring of this internal or spiritual marriage between man and nature, presupposes in order to its own genesis the outward or sensible diversity of the parties to the marriage, that is to say, presupposes the logical copulation of an active object (nature) with a passive or reactive subject (man). In short every such fact of life or consciousness involves constitutionally or in order to its own development and manifestation, the dual parentage in question: but for that reason it cannot actively or livingly *e*-volve it. Precisely this however is Kant's mistake. He makes life evolve existence not involve it; the child evolve its parents instead of involve them; and by a necessary fatality turns consciousness from a purely spiritual force to a material one, so converting infinite into finite, personality into mere reality, or man into a thing. Never was a grosser violence done to Philosophy. The finite is one with itself or identical: how is it possible to allege therefore

within its proper limits the logical contradiction of subject and object, of the me and the not-me? The finite is the exclusive realm of the me, *i. e.* of subjectivity; the infinite of the not-me, *i. e.* of objectivity. Every thing in nature says me with equal pertinency though with unequal emphasis. The mineral says it by its gravitation or *vis inertiæ*; the vegetable by its sensibility; the animal by its volition; man by his spontaneity. One form of finite existence may thus be more or less sharply defined than another, but differ as they may in this respect, they are all alike remote from the infinite. The elephant because it claims a longer life and a larger body than the flea, or involves in its existence more of time and space, exhibits the finite principle in greater measure; but he is not thereby the more nearly approximated to the infinite. On the contrary if any difference could exist in that regard, it would be to his disadvantage, inasmuch as he is the more finite of the two. The elephant indeed is an inferior form of animation to the flea, because its existence is so much more largely implicative of lower forms of life; just as an animal double the bulk of the elephant and twice as long-lived, would pronounce itself an inferior form of animality to him, by exhibiting double his own appropriation of vegetable and mineral characteristics. But these are all merely various grades of the Finite, not with reference to the infinite, but within itself; for the greatest conceivable intensity of the finite constitutes,

not the greatest nearness to, but the greatest remoteness from, the Infinite. Infinity implies not the totality of Space, but its revocation or disappearance; just as Eternity implies not the endless potentialization of Time, but its sheer consumption and denial.

II. The second point made by Kant in the foregoing analysis of perception, is even more frivolous, and need detain us but a moment. It is that what he calls the subjective element in every living transaction dominates of right what he calls the objective element: thus that when I perceive the rose my faculty of perception, considered as spatially isolated to my organization, controls or shapes the rose considered as spatially isolated from my organization, in such a manner as to confer upon the rose all its quality, or deprive it of substantive character.

Now Kant's initial blunder here, as we have already seen, consists in his confounding a fact of consciousness and therefore of fusion or unity, with a fact of sense and therefore of division or disunion. But allowing this to pass for the moment, and accepting for the sake of argument his preposterous distribution of subject and object in consciousness as valid, still the inference which he draws from it as to the regulative authority of the subject over the object, is intensely and scandalously fallacious. It is always the objective element in life which regulates or shapes the subjective element, never the contrary. It is the rose which in the act of knowledge or perception holds the prior or command-

ing place; it is my (so-called) "faculty" of knowledge or perception which holds the altogether secondary and submissive place. Nothing but the most unquestioning acquiescence in the dictation of sense, can account for the opposite conclusion. It seems indeed hardly needful to argue the point, a bare statement sufficing to justify it. For clearly I as a knowing subject, am constituted not by any abstract "faculty of knowing" I possess, but simply and sheerly by the concrete objects which I know. These things alone constitute the substance of my knowledge, so that if you deprive me of them, you deprive me at the same time, so far as knowledge is concerned, of subjective consciousness: though I should possess all the abstract "faculties" in that direction conceivable. My consciousness, as a knowing subject, is determined not by anything in itself, but by the things known. Deprive me then of the object of knowledge, and you at once stifle my subjectivity. I am a knowing subject only in so far as some known object makes me one. To say therefore that I as subject regulate the object: that I as knowing qualify the thing known: is very like saying, is indeed the same thing in effect as saying, that the child qualifies the parent, that the culprit gives character to the law. No doubt the child implies the parent; no doubt the culprit presupposes the law: but no one can seriously maintain that the child begets the parent; that the thief adjudicates the legal property of the community. Just as little is any one entitled to

maintain that I in knowing peaches impart to peaches their flavor and other attributes, or in knowing anything else give the thing known the least of its possessions. Whatever it possesses it possesses in the strictest independence of me, and, so far as I know it, claims me as its abject subject, incapable henceforth of unknowing it, or throwing off such subjection, while to the same extent positing itself of course as the controlling object of my knowledge.

The root of Kant's hallucination on this subject and every other, was his inveterate intellectual habit of running facts of life or consciousness into mere facts of existence or sense. But I have already made this plain enough to the most ordinary apprehension, and I will not dwell upon it. Let us rather ask now how this inveterate intellectual habit on Kant's part originated; why Kant felt it thus necessary intellectually to construe facts of life into facts of existence, or make the realm of physics no longer serve but dominate that of metaphysics.

The rationale of the phenomenon appears to me very plain. Kant wanted to account for existence, to explain creation, without resorting to the *Deus ex machinâ*, which is the expedient of the vulgar theology: but having no conception of any more real or spiritual *Deus*, and being much too rich a man intellectually to accept any help in that line from the Christian revelation, he concluded to give over working the Deus-hypothesis altogether, and spin a creation out of the bowels of the creature himself, or

excogitate a cosmos on exclusively cosmical data. Religion had become such a fossil to all intellectual uses, had so completely renounced the spiritual nurture of her offspring, that her traditional testimony as to the Divine existence and operation, confessed itself to his imagination a mere party shibboleth, a mere mercenary clamor for her own vested interests; and consequently left him thoroughly quit of all obligation to her. But though religion was both unable and unwilling to show him how God spiritually creates all things, he had not the least notion that they were uncreated; nor could he at the same time believe that they were self-created in the vulgar sense of the word creation, since every natural object confesses a natural parentage. What was the remedy then? Creation demanded an interpretation, existence required to be explained: only such interpretation or explanation refused to take place on merely historic or actual principles, and claimed an altogether transcendental basis, claimed in fact the sanction of a purely intellectual and hence purely unintelligible world. Thus in order to account for existence, or explicate creation in this transcendental way, we must admit that the things which appear to us horses, roses, emeralds, men, are not real horses, real roses, real emeralds, real men, but only phenomenal ones shaped by our extortionate sensibility: are not horses and roses and emeralds and men such as these things are in themselves, and apart from our mischievous interference, but a set of counterfeits degraded to

the level of our degrading intelligence. These things, since they derive all their qualities from us, have no selfhood, no being-in-themselves, and are consequently uncreated, being pure phantasms or will-of-the-wisps bred of our fatuous sensibility and intelligence. To get accordingly at the true philosophy of creation, we must demand a purely intellectual world, a world of purely noumenal things, which we can never apprehend either by sense or reason, nor even so much as affirm the existence of, since existence implies sensible finiteness and logical order or relation: but which for that very reason possess their being-in-themselves, thus are real things, and hence created.

In this puerile pedantic way Kant was delighted to reduce the sincere realm of Nature to an intellectual mirage, to convert her most fixed and absolute existences, her most ample and luminous order or harmony, into sheer illusions of our ignorance: so stamping all our knowledge and all our belief with permanent imbecility. He had as a philosopher two discordant orders of facts to deal with: facts of nature and facts of history; facts of identity and facts of individuality; facts of existence and facts of life; facts of sense and facts of consciousness; facts of finiteness and facts of infinitude; facts of order or relationship, and facts of personality or absoluteness: but instead of marrying these facts indissolubly together and bringing out by that conjunction a higher unity than either series by itself supplied, he was content to swamp the

higher series in the lower, and so evade every problem he felt himself unable to solve. He is like the schoolboy who throws his algebra in the river rather than face the requisitions of to-morrow's lesson. He would not regard us as true subjects of nature, because forsooth it pleased him not to regard nature herself as possessing any objective reality! Depriving us in this rude hobbledehoy fashion of our legitimate natural identity, he of course robs us *à fortiori* of our legitimate spiritual individuality; and hence leaves himself free to draw at pleasure upon that realm of transcendental moonshine, in which what he calls our noumena, or real selves, breathe and browse in eternal unconsciousness.

The whole speculation is inexpressibly childish. My identity — whatsoever gives me existence to my own consciousness, enables me to recognize myself, or say *me*, *mine*, and by implication therefore *thee*, *thine* — belongs to Nature, is wholly contingent upon her sovereign will. I am conscious only by virtue of my natural senses or organization. Take that away, and what should I know? Take away my knowledge, and what basis should I have for belief? Take away both knowledge and belief, both sense and understanding, and how much of me would remain? Where in that case should I be, and what? Could I be said to be at all indeed? To be sure some philosopher in search of an anchorage, might allege that I would still have my unconscious being in God. But my uncon-

scious being is precisely what is not my being but God's. I have not the slightest title to any being in myself but what my consciousness gives me. Unconscious being to a created one is contradictory. My consciousness is what separates me and alone separates me from God, in identifying me with Nature and Society. If consequently you take away my bodily organization, which is the sole ground of my consciousness or alone identifies me with nature and my fellow-man, you reduce me to nonentity. I should be like a house deprived of its foundation in the ground, and would at once cease to be.

Thus it is nature which gives me identity, and in that gift insures me all my power of subsequent spiritual expansion or individuality. She constitutes me, not I her. We know or perceive natural things alone, the horse, the tree, the mountain, the cloud, the river. Take these and similar natural things away, and we should know no-thing; that is, we should not know at all. Knowledge does not inhere in me apart from my subjection to nature. I know altogether by virtue of such subjection. In knowing the rose for example I put forth no power; so far as my proper individual force or activity is concerned, I am as helpless as the babe unborn. I cannot help knowing it. My natural organization endows me with the knowledge without asking my leave. To say therefore that I, cogitated apart from this helpless subjection to nature, possess or put forth any faculty of knowledge, is transparent nonsense. I have no

such faculty of knowing, because I have no such faculty of being. All my sensible knowledge, or sensible experience of every sort, is a fact exclusively of my natural identity with, and indistinction from, every other subject of my nature; and not in the slightest degree of my spiritual individuality or difference from them. To all the extent of my natural organization — that is to say, within the entire range of my inherited passions appetites and susceptibilities of every sort — I am an unmixed and helpless subject of nature, and so far identical with every other subject. Were it not for this fixed basis of identity or community with other men to begin with, all my characteristic individuality or diversity from them, which grows out of my subsequent action, would be simply impossible, and inconceivable.

In its last analysis then this conception of noumenal existence is a denial, in so far forth as it is predicated, of creatureship: since existence in-itself is precisely what no creature has or can have except by creation. And if it have it by creation, then clearly the true scope or object of Philosophy determines itself, with surprising distinctness, to be the creative perfection itself exclusively, from which so marvellous a boon proceeds. If the spiritual individuality which all existence reveals be the true quest of Philosophy, (as its natural identity is the true quest of science), you cannot of course trace that individuality to the creative infinitude, without making this infinitude henceforth the sole legiti-

mate aim of Philosophy. Here it was egregiously that Kant stumbled, and by stumbling brought all his servile followers into a confused ignominious heap on top of him. He utterly misconceived the true mission of Philosophy. He supposed it had to do directly with the creature and only indirectly with the creator; whereas the exact converse of this proposition is true. He conceived in other words that the true search of Philosophy was into what gave the creature natural identity or subjective consciousness, and not what gave it spiritual individuality or objective being out of that natural identity; so hopelessly swamping his pursuit in science, or sinking the philosopher in the pedant. The sole problem of Philosophy is creation: is to ascertain how the infinite creator imparts finite form to the creature; a form which shall be the creature's own and separate him to all eternity from the creator. It is obvious that no amount of scrutiny into the creature's natural constitution will avail to elucidate this problem, simply because the natural constitution or existence of the creature is involved or presupposed in his creation; and to deduce the latter from the former consequently would be to deduce the parent from the child, or the heart and lungs from the circulation. The only way to solve the problem is to leave off looking at the mere identity of the creature as naturally posited, and commence regarding his spiritual individuality which alone announces the creative presence and power within him.

This natural identity of the creature is doubtless all important to the interests of his subsequent spiritual evolution; and in that point of view of course it cannot be too sedulously vindicated. Indeed it is my express aim to show that God cannot create things, or give them spiritual individuality, save in so far forth as He first forms them or gives them natural identity. Nevertheless, indeed all the more, these interests are not to be confounded: the strictly hierarchical relation of servant and master, of base and building, of mould and form, invariably obtaining between them. To create a thing, as we have already said, is to give it inward or spiritual being; but as nothing inwardly is which does not also outwardly exist or go forth in appropriate form, so we are necessarily led to insist that creation regarded as an objective work of God involves in order to its own truth a subjective sphere of making or formation on the part of the creature. If it were not so, the creature must inevitably fail of that projection from his creative source which constitutes the actuality of the creative work. God himself who is infinite love and wisdom, constitutes the being of the creature, or spiritually creates him: if therefore the creature were not formally differenced from God, or finited to his own consciousness, he would not exist even phenomenally, and so far from ever coming to spiritual life, would forever lack even natural existence. To say all in a word, God's true creature is spiritual like God himself: but unless he be consciously

separated from God, *i. e.* forever identified to his own perception, irreparable damage and confusion must ensue in the infinite becoming finite, and the finite infinite.

Now I shall show by and by that it is Nature which alone fulfils this formative function. She it is that posits the creature to his own perception. She fixes him, finites him, or gives him indestructible identity to his own consciousness, so forever discriminating him from the infinite. Unless the spiritual creation were naturally organized, it could never get conscious embodiment or existence; the spiritual creature remaining in that case hopelessly destitute of that needful projection from the creator which makes self-consciousness possible to him and so avouches the reality of his creation. For the existence of the creature is quite as necessary to the reality of creation as that of the creator is; and if therefore the former do not present himself in a form quite as validly his own, as that of the creator is validly His own, the problem is instantly vacated of all its pith; that is to say, creation confesses itself a sheer imposture, and slinks off at once into a despicable cowardly Pantheism.

Kant had no perception of this needful implication of natural existence in spiritual, and was consequently destitute of any commanding doctrine of nature. His doctrine of Nature as we have seen was a mere shameless pilfering of the wardrobe of science in the interest of a tatterdemalion Philosophy. The man of science re-

pudiates Kant consequently quite as heartily as the philosopher does. For in order to deprive Philosophy of a rational basis and render it impossible, Kant, who saw no difference in the subject matter of the two pursuits, was obliged to postulate the imbecility of science as well. Instead of his ever suspecting even for a moment the pure subordination of science to Philosophy, and manfully acquiescing therefore in her provisional demonstration of the strict rationality of all existence, or its relativity to the human mind, his Critique of the Pure Reason is built upon the frankest possible assumption of the absoluteness of science. That is to say, he makes the understanding competent not merely to its own constitutional function, which is all simply to furnish the ratio or order which underlies all the data of sense, but also to the grandly creative office of assigning its own powers, defining its own empire, propounding its own laws, in short of bluffly saying *à priori* what it is totally incapable even of imagining save *à posteriori*. Kant fancied that he kept himself within the limits of experience, when discriminating between the formal and the material elements of knowledge. But not to insist (upon what nevertheless is conclusive on the subject) that our empirical knowledge can with no propriety of speech be made to include facts of life or consciousness, being confined wholly to facts of sense or memory: I have already abundantly shown that what Kant distinguishes as the formal or subjective, and the material or

objective, elements of knowledge, are totally indistinguishable in consciousness or life, and yield themselves up only to a *post-mortem* analysis, *i. e.* in unconsciousness or death. Never was a more subtle and flagrant case exhibited accordingly in the whole history of human thought, of the merest naturalism exalting itself into the highest places of Philosophy: of the conceited pragmatical little creature aping the prerogative of his great creator, and in fact practically shoving the latter from his stool.

But after all we must be just to Kant individually. The sensuous prejudice which deflected his judgment on all this subject he shares with almost all the learned. Almost nowhere as yet among the learned, so far as I can discover, is the distinction recognized between identity and individuality, between community and society, between our conscious existence and our unconscious being. The French asserters of a spiritual Philosophy, Maine de Biran, Theodore Jouffroy, Cousin, Emile Saisset, Paul Janet, and others, are struggling manfully towards a purely spiritual doctrine of life, inasmuch as they are intent upon wresting the moral instinct from the uses of a purblind materialism. Doubtless moral existence is the indispensable basis of spiritual life, and hence in maintaining the former interest intact, you essentially promote the latter. But the service is indirect, and no way justifies these generous disciples in pronouncing Philosophy herself wide awake. On the contrary their own persistent identification of the spiritual with

the moral element in life, or what is the same thing, the excessive strain they feel themselves obliged to put upon the Finite in order to inflate it to the dimensions of the Infinite, proves that she is at best but half-awake, and instead of truly mediating between her principals, is very often found doing little better than laboriously bump their astonished and unwilling heads together.

What Philosophy craves for her final redintegration, is this complete intellectual discrimination on our part of base from building, of our moral from our spiritual parts. Nothing but our habitual identification of these most distinct interests, is required to explain the persistent degradation of our intellectual life. The cellar of our intellectual structure is kept so continuous with its drawing-room and bed-room floors — there is so little separation or even effort at separation between them — that it is no wonder that the effluvia of decayed vegetation and animal disorganization pervade the house, or that vermin and dampness chase us up to our very garrets. How can the case be otherwise? If I am basely content with my physical constitution merely, or what allies me in nature with animal and plant: if I am content even with my moral constitution alone, or what allies me naturally with my fellow-man, and feel no aspiration towards that interior or spiritual individuality which alone allies me directly with God: the higher parts of my mind, being void of their proper substance, of their true Divine inhabitation, must inevitably expand to every baleful

exhalation from below: *i. e.* reflect and reproduce all the littleness, all the malignity and uncleanness, which inhere both in my absolute native penury, and my comparative lack of personal culture or refinement.

In other words, what Philosophy demands in order to her thorough extrication from the fallacies both of sense and reason, is the guiding light of Revelation. Our present so-called Philosophy has hitherto slighted this light in deference to science, or with a view to exalt the lower and more fickle authority of reason. Of set purpose indeed she allows Revelation, so full of the profoundest intellectual wealth, a purely religious significance, a merely tributary relation to natural theology, so exposing it to be trampled under the clownish and conceited hoofs of science: and she salves the wounds of the meek-eyed sufferer with a shrug at best of the most supercilious compassion. In short the fault of Philosophy is a defective self-consciousness, or so low a conception of her great office as leads her not to coördinate religion and science, not to harmonize the spiritual and moral life of man, but to give the latter and lower interest absolute priority of the higher; both Kant and Sir William Hamilton for example accepting the scientific induction of life as final, and relegating Philosophy consequently in any real sense of the word into an idle chase of shadows. Philosophy must at once withdraw from this unworthy position, or else consent to fill the grave which Kant has dug for her, and

out of which Sir William with boyish audacity declares she is entitled to no honor.

Religion and science are harmonized in Philosophy; but for that very reason they are never to be confounded. Moral existence at its highest is but the matrix of spiritual, and has no more pretension to be confounded with it, than the steward of a great house has to be confounded with its lord. There can be no objection to your doing the amplest justice to the steward, to your duly admiring his honest function, and estimating if you have the requisite information his assured and contingent emoluments. But do not forget that he is only a steward and shines with a reflected lustre. So is it with morality. It unquestionably lifts us out of animal conditions or separates us *toto cælo* from all that is not man; it constitutes us rational beings, having a power of control over our natural appetites and passions, and so insures us the supremacy of nature. Celebrate this great service as you will, only do not conceal its intrinsic subordination to spiritual ends. Demonstrate as vividly as you please the superior dignity of man to all the tribes of animated nature, in his possessing moral consciousness or a power of voluntary control over his merely animal contents. But do not forget for a moment that this shining endowment of the human form, deifying man as it does to the merely scientific eye, is yet by no means a finality or its own end: that it is itself in its turn but the humble earth of a far sublimer heaven, which

is that of man's spiritual destiny, the home of his immortal conjunction with God. It exists in fact only by the uses it promotes to this superior life. Our whole natural history is but a preparation for this great destiny. We come into nature with a superstitious belief in her absoluteness as affirmed by sense. Slowly the scientific reason relieves us of this tyranny. It gradually empties nature of substance in herself, and so prepares us for the mission of Philosophy which bids us recognize the end of all created things in man: not of course in man as still involved in nature, but as spiritually emancipated from her by a signal Divine work accomplished within her actual limits.

Uncontrolled by Philosophy science is of necessity atheistic; because so long as we consider morality absolute, or regard it as the highest type of life, we necessarily identify its subject with God, and vacate at last all valid ground of discrimination between creature and creator. If morality constitute the Divine style of life, it becomes evident at once that the difference between God and man is not one of kind but only of degree; is not the difference in other words of creator and creature, but of two equal subjects of the same law (as Dr. Bushnell delights to make it appear) one of whom may be much more perfect in his literal obedience, but cannot have the least pretension to prejudice the other's spiritual equality with him. And a sensuous Faith, a faith which exalts the creature to the creator, or lowers the creator to the

creature, by making the difference between them to be one of degree and not of kind, begets an atheistic Science, and a pantheistic Logic. Pantheism in the sphere of thought, the intellectual sphere, is but the reverberation of a practical Atheism in the sphere of observation, the scientific sphere: which itself betrays the predominance of sense in the sphere of life or experience. The human mind can no more exist without faith, than the body without a heart. Faith is indeed the heart of the mind, from which its life-blood (knowledge) primarily flows. But as sense which is the outward rind or body of the mind, its legs and arms, its multiform organs and enveloping cuticle, degrades whatsoever is spiritual in knowledge to what is carnal, it consequently returns to Faith no longer the ruddy life-giving tide it receives from her, but a blackened desecrated stream full of decay and death. Faith of course in her turn repugns the odious nutriment, and hands it over to reason, which is the lungs of the mind, for instant chastisement and defecation. But just as the lungs, when immersed in an atmosphere of their own making, no longer purify but only corrupt the blood, so reason unillumined by light from heaven, or shut up to her own earth which is sense, does not vivify but only inflates knowledge; does not sift what is mere dead fact within it from what is living truth, what is material from what is spiritual: but only and at best modifies thought from an atheistic to a Pantheistic form: in place of saying there is no God, says that all is God:

which is practically a worse thing, since a frank denial of the truth is much more hopeful than its specious falsification.

To sum up: wherever science and not life exclusively constitutes the subject-matter of Philosophy, as it does in Kant and all later German speculation inspired by Kant, the result to Philosophy herself is not an accomplished creation, or life of man on earth, in which infinite and finite harmoniously coexist and reciprocally embrace each other; but a chaotic muddle and hopeless sophistication of the two which baffle discrimination and helplessly disorganize intelligence. In this state of things what needs to be done in order to disengage Philosophy and put her on her feet, is to show that the true life of man, what we properly term his CREATION, is primarily a spiritual process, exacting no doubt his moral experience as the needful theatre of its own manifestation, but for that very reason refusing to be individualized by it any more than the soul is individualized by the body, or the actor by the dress in which he temporarily plays his part.

CHAPTER XXII.

The difference between a spurious and a true Philosophy — *i. e.* between a doctrine of Nature which makes Nature herself to be God's true creature, and one which makes her purely incidental to the Divine creation — becomes strikingly plain when you turn from Kant and confront Swedenborg. In Kant's hands Existence is declared to be unreal because it is finite and phenomenal, or without infinitude and absoluteness in-itself. On the other hand to Swedenborg these very disqualifications are the sure vouchers of its reality; since the infinitude and absoluteness of a created thing must necessarily attach to the thing not in-itself, but in its creator. To Kant accordingly Nature is a mere intellectual mirage, incapable of basing any rational superstructure; while to Swedenborg it is a solid earth of knowledge undecaying as the Divine perfection, and capable therefore of affording a most sure warrant to any amount of rational belief and expectation; a most steadfast base to any height or depth or breadth of spiritual and celestial observation.

Swedenborg's scheme of creative order is fashioned exclusively upon the truth of God's proper infinitude or perfection, which renders

Him not voluntarily but spontaneously or essentially creative: creative not by any mere act of power but in Himself, or by the whole necessity of His being. His love is so truly infinite, as being utterly unlimited by self-love, that His creation amounts to an actual process of self-alienation, if I may be allowed the phrase; so that in giving us being He necessarily gives Himself to us in the plenitude of His goodness truth and power. In a word according to Swedenborg God creates us or gives us being only by thoroughly incarnating Himself in our nature; but inasmuch as this descent of the creator to creaturely limitations incidentally involves of course, on the part of the creature, the strictest inversion of the creative perfection, or a spirit of the utmost pride rapacity and tyranny, so it must itself necessarily provoke a corresponding ascending or redemptive movement on God's part, giving us spiritual extrication from this infirmity. Otherwise creation would remain utterly inoperative save in a downward direction. If God should simply give me natural substance or identity without at the same time insuring me spiritual form or individuality, I should remain like the animal forever unconjoined with Him spiritually, and immersed in sensual delights. Let us clearly understand then that the Divine operation in creation is made up of two movements: one strictly objective or creative, which is a movement of humiliation consisting in giving us natural being or identity; the other strictly subjective and redemptive, which is a movement

of glorification consisting in giving us the amplest individual or spiritual expansion out of that base root. The prior movement — the descending, statical, and properly creative one — gives us natural selfhood or consciousness, a consciousness of separation from God, of a power inhering in ourselves and independent therefore of Him. The posterior movement — the ascending, dynamical, and properly redemptive one — gives us spiritual consciousness, a consciousness of union with God, and makes us abhor and recoil from nothing so much as the spiritual filth of all sorts — the exuberant pride, inhumanity, and concupiscence — which lies concealed in every motion of our moral power.

Stated in more general terms, Swedenborg's doctrine practically amounts to this: that the creative operation in humanity is under a certain necessity imposed by its own perfection to put on a strictly historic guise; or to struggle up from a natural root, through a rational stem, into a consummate spiritual flower. His method of demonstration may be formulated in three propositions of surpassing philosophic breadth, to which accordingly I invite the reader's close attention, namely: 1. God's perfection is such that He cannot create life, but only communicate it; 2. It is of prime necessity therefore that a suitable form exist prepared to receive such communication; 3. This form, thus necessary to enracinate creation or separate between creator and creature, must be itself natural.

The general import of these three propositions makes it a fundamental exigency of the creative perfection or infinitude, that its creature possess conscious or phenomenal existence, in order to his realizing the real or absolute being he has in God. In other words he must possess natural identity allying him with all other existence, before he can realize that spiritual diversity or individuality which alone allies him with God.

But let us look at each proposition in detail.

I. When we call God a perfect or infinite being, what do we mean? We mean that He is Life, the sole life of the universe, life-in-Himself, uncreated life. This is what we mean when we call God a perfect being, or allege His eternity and infinity. We know that our own life is derived; that we exist naturally and hence consciously only because our fathers have preceded us. But God has no father, being self-existent or uncreated, being in short Life itself. It is His express perfection or infinitude that He is Life itself, there being no life in the universal orb which does not reflect His mediate or immediate presence.

Now it is just this perfection of God which, according to Swedenborg, shapes creation, or makes it precisely what it is to the experience of the creature, namely: not a mere display of brute omnipotence conditioned in space and time, but a process of rational growth or forma-

tion involving all space and all time within itself, and therefore never dominated but only served by them. For this perfection of God, this fact of His being Life itself, makes it impossible that He should create life. If He should create life, if He should summon into existence a being who should be not merely a form or subject of life, but life itself, then that being would be God; and creature and creator consequently would be at eternal loggerheads. God cannot create life therefore, since this would be contrary to His essential infinitude, but only communicate it. And as God himself is life, to communicate life to the creature means of course to communicate Himself. Thus creation consists not in any creation of life, which is absurd, but altogether in a communication to the creature of that life which God already and unchangeably is: so that the creature is never life itself even within his own limits, but only and at most a form of life, a perfect form or image of life, a perfect organ or subject of life, into which the Divine Life inflows and indwells as in Himself, communicating His eternal power and beauty.

II. Such being the law of the creative Perfection, that it communicate life in place of creating it, it is at once obvious that the creature must have a form of his own, must possess consciousness or be phenomenal to himself, in order not to be swallowed up in God. If the thing created should be without the form or appearance of being to itself; if it had no proper con-

sciousness, no indestructible identity to its own perception, how could it possibly be discriminated or individualized from God when animated by Him? Evidently the fundamental exigency of any creation we can recognize is, that the creature possess selfhood or conscious freedom and rationality: that he have at all events an apparent life in himself, in order to his being projected from God, and so prepared for that subsequent Divine influx and inhabitation in which alone his spiritual individuality, or immortal being, consists. It may be in itself the merest semblance of life; it may be, as inwardly or spiritually beheld, full of death in fact: but to him the conscious subject it must appear the most absolute of realities, under pain of invalidating every subsequent exhibition of the creative energy towards him.

Let us make sure that we clearly apprehend this point, for it makes all the difference between heavenly truth and infernal error.

I say that the inexorable prerequisite of God's spiritual end in creation is, that the creature get extrication from the creator; become posited to his own consciousness as a free being; attain in short to an every way veracious selfhood. If the creature should not consciously exist; if he should not possess finite form or selfhood, he would obviously be destitute of identity, could not be said to be, and neither creation nor anything else could be predicated of him. To create means to give being or communicate life to what assuredly is not oneself; and if this be

so the creator is bound in order to impart His own being or communicate Himself to the creature, above all things else to posit the creature, or afford him some adequate and veracious ground of self-consciousness. Thus selfhood, which is one's ability to feel one's life as one's own and not as another's in him, is the inexpugnable necessity of creation; inasmuch as without it there can be no conceivable communication of life on the part of the creator, hence no creation. The creature must be absolutely and unchangeably himself, must possess identity, or real and conscious distinction from his creator: otherwise creation in any honest sense of that word must confess itself an unqualified sham, and tumble off into the bottomless abyss of Pantheism.

If indeed the orthodox and vulgar conception of creation were true, which makes it a mere *impromptu* spurt of the Divine power, as essentially wanton or capricious as that whereby an idle horseman with a stroke of his whip lays low the head of an aspiring thistle, then we might conceive otherwise. Then we might allow disorder to constitute the true order of creation, without any shock to our intelligence, simply because we could not possibly have in that case any intelligence to be shocked or unshocked; for intelligence means exclusively the perception of a Divine order in creation. But the orthodox conception as we have seen is irredeemably irrational or vicious, because reason insists that it does not fall within the scope even of Divine

power to create life but only to communicate it. Life cannot be created because God himself is life: the sole, the total, the unchangeable life of all things that have life; so that for Him to create life would be to create Himself, who yet is essentially uncreated. And it must be communicated to the creature, so as to be in him as his own, before it can be enjoyed by him. Because unless it were so communicated; *i. e.* made by the Divine bounty a common possession between Him and His creature: the latter must utterly fail to image his creative source, must remain in fact unconscious, insensate, inanimate, without any sign of being. The very marrow of the Divine perfection lies in this; that He is life in Himself: and one instantly perceives therefore that an alleged creature of God who should not at least appear to have life in *him*-self as well, feeling it to be his own and not another's in him, would manifestly be no image of God, and consequently confess himself no creature. If the creature were destitute of selfhood or identity; if to his own perception at least he did not seem to be quite naturally, *i. e.* independently of anything beyond his own nature; he would of course remain purely passive or inert to the Divine communication, and confess himself forever dead to the faintest breath of life.

By the sheer necessity of the case, then, creation involves in order to its own functioning a distinctively formative sphere of experience on the part of the creature, by means of which the creature who is Divinely vivified, may come to

self-consciousness, to the formal recognition of himself as so vivified. Let us rather say that the creative *nisus* totally merges in this preliminary process of formation, so that God actually creates or gives being to things only in so far as He first gives them subjective form.

Such are the implied philosophic contents of our first two Propositions. I know very well how superfluous they will seem to the ordinary religious apprehension. The orthodox religionist has not the least idea of nature as a needful involution of God's spiritual operation in creation; that is, he has no idea of our natural creation in the Divine image being requisite to base our subsequent spiritual and unimpeded conjunction with Him. He conceives that creation was a purely superficial display of the Divine power, involving no rational method or order, implying no subjective or conscious discrimination of creature from creator, inferring in fact no interior physiology of any sort, but being a mere brute effect of lawless, irrational, unprincipled, irresistible might. Orthodoxy, or Natural Religion, conceives without a misgiving that space and time are the real or infinite substances of the universe; that they are modes of God's being, conditions of His consciousness, needful elements of His existence, as of ours: thus that there were aboriginally to His perception an infinite space where and an eternal time when creation was not: *i. e.* where and when He dwelt in awful inactivity. And it regards creation itself consequently, not as the munificent inves-

titure it really is, on God's part, of His dependent creature with His own infinite and eternal power and blessedness, but as the mere implétion of these idle gaping and loathsome wildernesses of space and time with their present fixed and movable contents, their existing mineral vegetable and animal furniture. Its conception is that what God creates or gives being to must be intrinsically void not only of being but of seeming; not only of substance but of form; not only of objective reality but of subjective phenomenality: so that all pretence to separate the creature from the creator on the basis of a veracious natural selfhood becomes absurd, and his subsequent rise into moral, much more into spiritual, life or consciousness, confesses itself simply inconceivable and incredible.

Thus the received orthodox idea is that creation is a purely physical exploit of God whereby He makes all things out of absolutely no substance whatever real or fallacious: that is, out of pure nothing: by a simple fiat of arbitrary volition; and hence logically it turns the creature from a spiritual being capable of communion with his maker, capable of freely reflecting or reproducing in himself all Divine perfection, into a graceless stock or stone without self-consciousness or visibility to others, without spirituality or corporeity, in short without one solitary feature of resemblance to the creator to rescue it from ghastly idiocy and death.

To state these notions is to refute them. They belong obviously to the childhood of the

mind, the period of its subjection to the teachings of sense (symbolically, the serpent). Nothing does not and cannot exist. There never was a time when things were not, nor a space where they were not; because things exist only to a rationally and sensibly finited intelligence: time and space being the mere universals of such an intelligence, its constitutional implication and attestation. It is thus supremely childish to cogitate creation as an incident of time and space, however brief or however protracted. If you allow it only this force you reduce it at once to actual nullity, or leave it only an ideal truth, by making it a mere phenomenon of the human mind. Space and time are really mental substances, having no other function than to compel all the objects of Nature and all the events of History into the compass of the human form. In this state of things it is of course preposterous to imagine a space where and a time when creation did not exist, but was summarily mechanized into being. Scepticism is not only our reasonable service here, it is rigidly imperative upon every lover of truth. Not scepticism indeed, but the frankest possible denial, is properly incumbent upon every candid mind, with respect to these mere *enfantillages* of cosmological inquiry. The interests of the most sacred verity require that we begin at last to entertain worthier conceptions of the creative power: that we leave off looking upon creation as a momentary exploit of the Divine volition, and commence regarding it as an infinite and

eternal incarnation of the Divine Love and Wisdom in all the varied forms of human nature. The Divine power is primarily spiritual, and natural only by derivation from that. In other words man is the sole spiritual creature of God, and animal vegetable and mineral are his creatures only by virtue of their necessary implication in man. Thus space and time far from lying outside the Divine creation and furnishing its theatre as we suppose, fall most strictly within it, being only two most coarse or universal expressions of the absolute unity in variety, and of the infinite variety in unity, which severally animate it, and keep it eternally fresh and fragrant. In one word: space and time with all their contents are embraced in the human consciousness, and have no other function than to afford a finite basis, a fixed continent, for its superb spiritual evolution.

Let us clearly understand then that creation of necessity, or in order to its own integrity involves a preliminary sphere of formation or redemption, and that all our orthodox cosmologies are unspeakably puerile in a philosophic estimation, because they make no allowance for this necessity, but on the contrary persist in regarding it as a paltry *tour de force* on God's part, a mere wilful and extempore proceeding, without rational gradation or order. The first condition of intellectual progress for us is that we discard this antiquated travesty of the truth, and commence conceiving of creation as the giving being by God to what has subjective or phenome-

nal consciousness, to what necessarily appears to be in itself. Nothing does not exist, since all existence is made up of persons and things; and to say that God gives being to what does not even to its own apprehension exist, or possess at the very least a fallacious consciousness, is to leave no ground of discrimination between creature and creator, and to end by organizing a nauseous Pantheism. Nothing means on its face as in its bosom no-thing, non-existence. It means what neither is nor appears to be, what has neither being nor the semblance of being, neither substance nor form, neither real nor conscious existence. All finite existence is of two kinds personal and real, moral and physical. Whatsoever transcends both of these categories is spiritual and infinite; whatsoever falls below them is not to be conceived, does not exist, is no thing even.[1] To represent the Deity accordingly as creating or giving being to this pure nothingness, as imparting Himself to this absolute non-existence, is at once to make creation itself devoid of actuality by depriving it of consciousness. Consciousness as all experience wit-

[1] The word nothing means the logical negation of identity, as being that which has neither inward substance nor outward form, neither real nor phenomenal existence, being in fact the hopeless prorogation of both. To say then that God creates all things out of nothing, is virtually to say that the things thus alleged to be created are not things, that they are destitute not merely of consciousness but of visibility to others, or do not enjoy even an apparent existence: and hence instead of being rightly chargeable with good and evil, are void of all conceivable selfhood or identity, and hence out of all possible relation to God forever.

nesses cannot be outwardly imparted, but must in all cases be inwardly begotten, since it is not a simple or absolute possession of its subject, but a complex or relative one, being an invariable term of relation between him and his nature. Consciousness always means the marriage fusion or unity of a common nature and a specific subject of that nature. Accordingly selfhood or subjective existence, no matter how fallacious it be when regarded objectively, is the indispensable prerequisite of God's creative designs; because the creature's identity, or conscious separation from the creator, by which the truth of creation is eternally vitalized — without which indeed it sinks into a contemptible farce — would be otherwise hopelessly confiscated.

I have now said all that seems needed at present in elucidation of our First and Second propositions, which together imported that inasmuch as creation consists not in the creation of life but only in the communication of it by the creator to the creature, it follows that the latter must exist in a form suitable to receive such communication.

III. Let us next examine our Third proposition which runs thus: "The only form suited to give creation root or embodiment is of necessity NATURAL:" being in fact the very form of Nature. Why should the created form be of necessity natural? Why must it needs involve the relation between a common nature and an individual subject of that nature? Why might it not be a purely spiritual form, *i. e.* retain the indi-

vidual element and exclude the communistic one? I shall try to make my answer full and clear.

In the first place let me remind the reader of what it is that makes any form necessary to the creature, namely: the interests of his identity, which require his absolute formal discrimination from the creator. Creation as we have seen is nothing more nor less than a COMMUNICATION of life on the part of the creator to the creature. But manifestly this communication could never take place unless some basis exist adequate to its transaction; that is to say, unless some *quasi* or phenomenal life in himself be allowed the creature, in order to serve as the medium of the creative communication. Spiritually viewed creation means the eternal conjunction of creator and creature; but what sort of conjunction would this be, if the creature were without any identity, forever discriminating him to his own perception from the creator? Evidently no conjunction at all, and consequently no creation. The whole stress accordingly of the creative Providence is exerted to secure a permanent and ample base for creation, in endowing the creature with selfhood or subjective constitution. The interests of the creature's identity are necessarily the prime care of the creative Love, its whole spiritual activity remaining contingent upon their being indestructibly guaranteed. In other words selfhood or consciousness in the creature is the altogether inevitable postulate of the Divine power in creation: everything

being possible to it if that postulate be granted: nothing whatever if it be denied. It is not by any means the consummate flower and fruit of creation; but only that rude incidental husk which gives bodily nourishment to the flower and fruit according to the demands of their inward nature: only that abysmal foundation in short or indispensable subterranean root, without which creation, spiritually regarded, could never either flourish or fructify. For it is obvious to a glance that if life were conferred upon the creature immediately by God; if it were conveyed to him by some direct exhibition of the Divine power, and without any constitutional reaction on his part; it would be nothing short of an imposition. And the creature in that case would be so far from any capacity to appropriate it, or feel it to be his own, that he would not be able even to perceive it. He would be less in sympathy with it spiritually than the stone is in sympathy with the genius of Shakspeare.

The reader perceives clearly by this time, that what is exacted in the creature first of all is a form of existence which shall above all things unmistakably identify him, or eternally separate him to his own consciousness from God: since that very communication of life to him which alone, spiritually speaking, constitutes his creation, is absolutely contingent upon such identification and perishes without it.

But now if the reader see thus much very clearly, he will be ready to see still further:

that if the interests of the spiritual creation require that the creature be at all discriminated *in se* from the creator, they require that he be so discriminated to the utmost possible extent, or to the point of utter antagonism: the infinitude of the creative power being contingent upon its bringing good out of evil, life out of death. Conscious antagonism to God is the inevitable implication of the created form. For the creature being the unlimited dependent of God, it is evident that he must be in himself or absolutely, *i. e.* to all the extent of his uncreation, so to speak, or phenomenal disjunction with God, the direct denial and destitution of what he becomes by his subsequent creation, or real conjunction with God. If the creature were not a creature, then I grant he would be God himself, infinite in all his attributes. But so long as he is a creature he must necessarily be in-himself — in that thing which separates him from God by giving him identity or defining him to his own consciousness — the exact and total opposite of God. The naked fact of his creatureship enjoins that he be in-himself or by uncreation, the total destitution of what he becomes in God or by creation. This intrinsic destitution as we have seen is the inevitable mould or matrix of his subsequent Divine enlargement, of his eventual impletion with all Divine perfection. For as the law of the mould is that it present in itself the exact inversion of the thing moulded, it follows necessarily that the only form suited to inaugurate God's spirit-

ual kingdom, is one which shall exhibit not merely the absence of the Divine infinitude or perfection, but the intensest actual finiteness or imperfection. To sum up all in a word: an exact inverse ratio must obtain between what the creature is in himself or subjectively, and what he becomes in God or objectively; between what he is by natural genesis merely, and what he subsequently becomes by spiritual growth or culture. Otherwise of course, his consciousness will lack a veracious basis, and perish like a plant cut off from its roots in the ground, or a house deprived of its foundation.

Thus the reader perceives that if it be true on the one hand that God gives us being (creates us) only in so far as he gives us form (makes us): it is equally true on the other that the essential implication of the form thus given, is conscious contrariety to Himself; since no other consciousness than this would be suitable to base creation, by conferring on the creature a valid identity.

Now what form of existence actually responds to this inexorable requisition, actually presents an aspect so intrinsically hostile to the Divine infinitude, as makes it every way suitable to inaugurate creation, by affording the creature an indisputably valid basis of consciousness, a selfhood so inextinguishably his own, that for it he will cheerfully leave father and mother — *i. e.* renounce his allegiance to infinite goodness and truth — and cleave to its fortunes through death and hell? We shall see in one moment.

The perfection of God as we have already seen consists in His unity, that unity which makes all life to centre in Himself, and leaves Him consequently without any fellowship. His unity is so absolute as to exclude all community, and stamp Him the only One, the sole Living and True. Thus He is absolutely void of limitation, being perfect or infinite in Himself, and hence has no power of relation to others save in so far as He is Himself primarily and strictly creative of those others. His unity in short is made up of two elements, universality and individuality: and it is an infinite or perfect unity, because, of these two elements the latter or individual and feminine one, involves or includes the former or universal and masculine one.

Now obviously the only inverse form of this absolute unity of God is COMMUNITY, which is a relative or partitive unity, made up of its subject's participation of a common nature with others, and shared equally by those others. Accordingly if we would lay our hand upon a form of life answering by inversion to the Divine infinitude or absoluteness (*i. e.* infinitely finite, absolutely relative, or perfectly imperfect) we shall find it to be one in which the masculine or universal element involves and controls the feminine or individual element; that is to say, a form of life in which the subject is seen partaking a community of nature with others: this community of course limiting, as it confers, all his individual faculty and enjoyment.

Now where shall we find any such actual

form of life, any style of life presenting this actual intrinsic inversion of the Divine perfection?

Manifestly Nature alone, what we call the natural form of life as contradistinguished from the spiritual, responds to our summons. Nature alone supplies that communistic quality of existence which renders her a rigidly inversive analogy of the Divine existence, and so allows her to fix creation, to finite it or make it actual. Community is the very essence of nature, every natural subject being what he is only by virtue of his birth or derivation from others, thus by virtue of his participation of a strictly common nature with others. The subject of nature accordingly instead of being infinite or perfect, as God is, in involving his own substance, is of necessity most finite or imperfect as finding his substance wholly without him, that is in his relations to others. In fact every natural subject is but an organized form of want, all his natural appetites and passions being so many confessions, not of his subjective possession of anything, but of his objective destitution of all things, and hence so many unsuspected but genuine manacles of his servitude to outlying nature. Appetite and passion are the marks of an imperfect being, because they express not freedom but dependence, not wealth but poverty. God consequently is without these limitations, while man naturally viewed is wholly made up of them: the reason of the difference being that the former is essential freedom, the latter essential dependence.

Nature then affords that essential inexpugnable basis — that indispensable and only adequate mould — of the Divine operation in creation of which we are in search, in that she alone presents an inverse image of the Divine perfection, and so becomes qualified to matriculate the created consciousness, or separate between creator and creature. If she were a direct image (which is however a contradiction in terms) of the Divine perfection, all her subjects would of course passively reflect that perfection; and consequently in place of any line of demarcation, any ground of discrimination, offering itself between creator and creature, the latter must inevitably have failed of his identity, must inevitably have forfeited all possibility of distinctive character or personality: for what rightful property could the creature possess in his creator's perfection? It is thus all simply the fact of nature's intrinsic finiteness or imperfection which, being organized, fits her to be the exact and admirable matrix or vehicle of the Divine creation, and justifies Revelation in placing the true theatre of the Divine power on the earth, or identifying the unsullied Divine glory with the most despised dishonored and dispirited of human beings.

We now see our Third Proposition to be fully justified, or understand why it is that the true form of the Divine creation is natural, since no other form could worthily matriculate the creature in affording him conscious separation or projection from the creator. Nature

gives the creature conscious disjunction with the creator, and hence makes possible any amount of subsequent spiritual conjunction between them. She posits the creature to his own perception as the exact and total opposite of God, so emphasizing or intensifying the sweetness of their eventual perfect intimacy and fellowship. This is very much to do no doubt; it is a most indispensable part of the creative process, but it is evidently altogether preliminary. It is only the foundation of the edifice, and furnishes at best but an inverse hint of the unimaginable splendors of the superstructure. So long as the natural consciousness dominates the Divine creature in the interests of his eternal identity, he lives to be sure, but it is an embryonic life: he has not yet come to spiritual birth, and is consequently destitute of that grandly human consciousness which is the consummate fruit of the creative operation.

To sum up. The indisputable function of Nature, her inmost soul and meaning, is to fix creation, is to afford the creature indestructible identity by developing in him such an abject or unrelieved community with other things as shall stamp him intrinsically finite or imperfect, and so array him in implacable conscious antagonism to the Divine name. She alone supplies this adequate base to creation, because her essential communism affords so ample and ready an inversion of the Divine infinitude, as suffices to give both veracity and vivacity to the created consciousness, and thereby permanently separate

between creator and creature. She is thus a pure incident of the Divine creation; or if an end, a wholly mediate and transitional one; her total efficacy lying in the uses she promotes to something higher than herself, namely: a spiritual or strictly *super*-natural form of existence. In one word Nature is rigidly involved in man or the spiritual creation; and instead therefore of herself involving him, she does nothing but systematically and untiringly evolve him.

Clear notions on this point are to the last degree important. Let my reader not fail to mark, then, that while nature's intrinsic finiteness or imperfection unquestionably fits her for the great succulent or maternal relation she fulfils towards the creature — fits her to be the exact and admirable womb of creation — it also restricts her to this purely maternal or constitutive use, and cuts her off from any creative or originative pretensions towards the creature. She no more creates him, or gives him spiritual being, than the mother creates the child, than the acorn creates the lordly oak which grows out of its tiny bosom, or the egg creates the soaring eagle which is born of its corruption. Her function is a purely incidental one, falls strictly within creation proper; being all summed up in fixing the creature, in giving him that merely maternal investiture or environment which shall consciously alienate him from God, *i. e.* make him another than God to his own consciousness; and so qualify him for his subsequent eternal spiritual conjunction with God. She endows the creature with material form, but only as the

necessary basis of his true or spiritual being. She gives him root, so to speak, or mineral body: leaving his vegetative growth and animal motion, much more his human action, to a wholly opposite and infinitely superior source. She is thus only the lifeless scaffolding of creation, the base and abject mud of mere appearance, out of which God's true or spiritual creature, being inwardly quickened with all Divine power, emerges at last in faultless human proportions. In truth nature is but the requisite background of the human consciousness, the needful field of projection which the Divine workman exacts, in order to adapt His creative skill to the created intelligence: it has no more title accordingly to be regarded as animating the work or giving it spiritual substance, than the canvas upon which Raphael painted has to be regarded as inspiring, or giving æsthetic substance to, Raphael's pictures.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Such is the broad philosophic light which Swedenborg interpreting Revelation casts upon the origin of Nature. It is an involution of the me exclusively; an implication of the human form; a necessity of man's subjective or literal identity purely, and has no other relation therefore to the not-me, *i. e.* to his objective or spiritual being, than bricks and mortar have to a house, or a canvas to a picture. It furnishes him with finite constitution, with phenomenal or conscious existence; and to that extent of course denies him infinite or absolute being: *i. e.* separates him from God. Nature is involved in man, spiritually regarded, just as the marble is involved in the statue; that is to say, not as giving it spiritual form or individuality, but only material substance or identity. As the marble gives phenomenal substance or relief to the statue, so Nature gives phenomenal substance or background to man: but she no more vivifies or creates him — no more endows him with individuality or spiritual being — than the marble vivifies or creates the statue. Her indisputable function is to finite the creature, to fix or identify him to his own consciousness, so forever separating him from God: in order that

God may thereupon spiritually in-finite him by conjoining him freely with Himself.

Thus Nature plays an altogether subordinate part in the great drama of creation; not a principal or controlling part, as Religion and Science conceive, but a purely accessory and instrumental one. Nature is the mother of the creature, giving him finite existence merely; while God alone is his father, giving him infinite being, immortal spiritual life as well. Nature is the convenient medium or hyphen which really or spiritually disjoins father and child, while apparently or literally conjoining them, by endowing the latter with her own finite substance. But this is literally all her virtue. She has no educative or vivifying efficacy over this still uncouth unconscious offspring of her own bowels. While her term of gestation endures, while man is still in embryo, being shut up to purely vegetable and animal conditions, the mother undergoes any amount of passive anguish, suffering at times intolerable nausea vertigo and syncope. And she releases him at last from her tender anchorage with infinite amazement and agony to herself, only that she may see him grow away as rapidly as possible from every remembrance of indebtedness to her, and bring her in fact under abject vassalage to himself.

The simple fact of Nature's being this purely incidental or mediatorial force, of her existence being a mere implication in a grandly human or spiritual end, empties her of all reality except to sense, stamps her with intrinsic insignificance,

pronounces her in herself void of life, insensate, inanimate, unconscious, incapable of any conceivable characteristic. Accordingly when we see her to be actually brimful of life, teeming with consciousness, with sensation, with every form of animation, everywhere pervaded by character or distinctive form, fairly bristling all over with the fiercest self-assertion, we may be sure that these things originate not in her, but in something distinctly above her; *i. e.* confess no natural, but an intensely supernatural or spiritual origin. And what Philosophy does for us — precisely what Philosophy, following the lead of Revelation, does for us in emancipating us from the tutelage both of Natural religion and Natural science — is, so to trace back this exuberant life of Nature, her pervasive consciousness, her corrosive personality, her endlessly diversified character, to the very infinitude of the Divine power as embodied and illustrated in Man social and spontaneous, as infallibly to disperse all doubt of her origin forever, and engage both science and faith, both reason and sense, in boundless adoration.

Nature's existence is implied in man as the foundation of a house is implied in the superstructure; because man alone avouches himself the true end of creation, inasmuch as he alone livingly images or reproduces God's spiritual perfection, in finding his principle of action within himself, and denying at his maturity all outward constraint and obligation. The human form regarded as directly vivified or inhabited by

the Infinite is of that rich and sovereign make, that it involves in itself every lower form of nature mineral vegetable and animal; presupposes in fact, as its own subjective basis, the entire universe of space and time with all their contents. We cannot help conceiving of the Divine work as thus culminating in man, because man is the only spiritual being we know. To rob creation therefore of its strictly human crown would be to reduce it to an abjectly physical process, consisting at best in giving the creature natural animation, or investing him with rational soul as well as sensitive body, while the interests of his immortal spiritual individuality were wholly left out.

Of course it is inevitable that as all the forms of Nature are thus involved in the human form, the due and perfect evolution of the latter should have been postponed to the necessities of the former; that the principal should remain for a long time obscured by the accessory; that the inexperienced traveller in fact should be temporarily blotted out and buried under the weight of his own superincumbent baggage, so that it takes millenniums to disengage him and put him on his proper feet. But Nature infallibly fulfils her office in the long run, being prompt to confess the pervading presence of a great spiritual force which we call History or Progress. History perfectly explicates the implicit contents of Revelation, by bringing out in clear ineffaceable lines the inextinguishable difference between man and all other known existences. It shows

us that man has an individuality which is manifestly disproportionate to his nature, while theirs is in every case a rigidly proportionate endowment; a faculty of æsthetic or ideal action and passion, to which there is nothing whatever in them either similar or second. Let me dwell on this for a moment.

The reader knows that it would be supremely silly to talk of an individual animal's "genius" as we do of an individual man's, say Shakspeare's or Franklin's. Why? Because the animal is utterly servile to his natural instinct, and hence perfectly devoid of that power of distinctively individual action which we call genius in man, and which as it excludes a physical derivation confesses of necessity a purely spiritual substance. The animal knows no happiness but in abject submission to his nature, in orderly subjection to all its appetites and passions. Man on the contrary by an instinct of his paternal infinitude, of his direct derivation from God, so resents the pretension of his nature to control him, that he rushes madly into the jaws of hell, into all manner of disorder disease and death, rather than tolerate it for a moment. The animal is alike incapable either of elevation into the angel or of degradation into the devil; simply because he is an animal or living soul, without being at the same time like man a quickening spirit; and having no claim therefore to that distinctively human capacity of freedom, of which angel and devil are only the positive and negative poles. Every man on the contrary in-

cludes in his bosom the highest heavens and the lowest hells, or the profoundest possibilities both of good and evil, simply because he is man: *i. e.* because the unqualified divinity of his origin emancipates him from the control of his nature: the devil being the direct or negative and disorderly form of such emancipation; the angel its indirect or positive and orderly form.

The slow but sure vindication then of the human form in creation or of the supremacy of Man over Nature, is what is meant by historic progress. History means the gradual extrication of the human consciousness from its natural or maternal environment, in order to its complete unimpeded union with all Divine perfection. The precise historic issue aimed at and accomplished is, such a thorough separation (through the activity of the Divine spirit in human nature) of the individual, spiritual, or feminine element in consciousness, from the merely common or natural and masculine element; and then such a thorough reduction of the latter to the spontaneous subserviency of the former; as will amount practically to A PERFECTED SOCIETY OR FELLOWSHIP AMONG MEN: which fellowship or society accordingly avouches itself as the inmost scope and meaning of man's Providential destiny on earth; the one supreme and only interest in which every man whatever be his internal or spiritual distance from other men, stands indissolubly united with his race, and may become to the fullest degree a voluntary and zealous co-worker with God.

Formation is thus the grand philosophic secret of creation; the grand controlling interest of human destiny. To find the true and adequate form for the creative substance, for the infinite Divine influx and indwelling, constitutes in fact the very mould of the intellect, and the measure of its perfect enfranchisement. By the necessity of his creation man is a composite or social existence, not a simple or isolated one. He is created, as the symbolic narrative of creation in Genesis attests, both male and female. Now when we talk of what man is by creation, we mean of course what he is in God. For God alone creates him, or gives him being; whatsoever therefore he is by creation, he is exclusively by virtue of the Divine Perfection. But being implies existence; substance implies form. That is to say, whatsoever the creature is by creation, he is bound also to become by formation; whatsoever he is in God, he is bound to bring forth in himself; under penalty of leaving creation a mere figure of speech. If then by creation man be not a simple but a composite existence; if the creative Perfection itself require that he be not a solitary but a social being; it follows of course that his very form as man, all his experience of himself, his inseparable self-consciousness, must reflect this necessity. His proper life or selfhood must in order to his imaging God involve two movements, one statical, the other dynamical, and constitute their unity. That is to say, his existence must be both natural and spiritual, both common and proper, both

public and private, both universal and particular, both generic and specific, both broadly identical with all other existence, and yet intensely individual and distinct from it.

Adam, before the birth of Eve, pictures to us what man is by creation merely; an eternal infant, incapable of growing in love and wisdom and power, because he is without selfhood, or personal experience; without any experience of himself, and consequently without any possibility of spiritual reaction towards — and spiritual conjunction with — his infinite source. Were we not made then as well as created; did not God give us finite existence as well as infinite being; the coarser or masculine element of our consciousness, the universal element or element of identity which unites us with our race, would so dominate and absorb the finer feminine element, the element of individuality, which unites us with God, that we should have been animals, not men, or remained mere stunted nurslings of God's assiduous Providence. Thus creation philosophically involves formation; requires that the creator not only give being to the creature — which He does by the communication to him of His own spiritual substance or perfection — but also that He give him form: that is, a power to react towards this communication, to expand to it, receive it, appropriate it, make it his own, reproduce it in his own life and action. In other words creation legitimately implies that whatsoever the creator be in Himself, become actually wrought out to the last gasp within the

creature's proper consciousness; become intelligibly formulated within the strictest bounds of the creature's own experience; that so he may spiritually react towards the creator, and that fellowship or conjunction consequently take place between them, which alone is immortal life.

Revelation confirms this philosophic induction, by reporting Adam — who in the symbolic Genesis represents the merely created or celestial man — as without selfhood; as the mere passive creature of the Divine power, the mere passive recipient of Paradisiacal delights: *for Adam there was not found a help-meet for him.* With Eve accordingly, who symbolizes his Divinely vivified selfhood, Adam's proper personal experience begins; or the negative innocence of childhood prepares itself to be taken up into the positive innocence of ripe and wise manhood. I say "prepares itself," for Eve, though she be an indispensable and invaluable acquisition to Adam, fails for a time to avouch that fact very clearly. In other words, the selfhood in man, Divinely quickened in his bosom, is spiritually inexpert and ignorant, being dependent at first of course upon sense (symbolically, the serpent) for all its knowledge; and sense, though a very good servant, is a very stupid master. Sense has no perception of infinite but only of finite substance; thus of good as limited by evil, of truth as limited by falsity, of beauty as limited by deformity, of pleasure as limited by pain, and so forth; and it consequently persuades us,

in spite of every sacredest tradition we may have heard to the contrary, that to eat diligently *of the tree of knowledge of good and evil* is the one infallible method of becoming wise. The innocent tender babe, who sees heaven laid bare to its imagination in the fragrant pastures of its mother's bosom, has for a long time no wink of recognition to bestow upon the wrinkled paternal visage which is making all sorts of mendicant signals to it over the maternal shoulder. Exactly so with the innocent new-born Eve of our bosoms, our tender God-quickened selfhood. We know ourselves at first only on the mother's side, only as identified by Nature, being altogether cradled in her lap, and nursed on her generous breasts; and what can we know without larger experience, what can we livingly know, know except from tradition, of our higher paternity? Manifestly nothing. We have, and can have, no ear but for the subtle and sweet and succulent invitations of sense, nor consequently any doubt of becoming like God in diligently cultivating a finite righteousness, which means, seeking to be good by right of nature, instead of Divine right exclusively. Thus the first and highest possible service which Eve renders Adam is to throw him out of Paradise: *i. e.* strip him of the innocence which he has by creation merely, and which consists only with ignorance of his proper self, in order finally to clothe him with the innocence which he will have by virtue of a Divine redemption of his nature, and which is one with the profoundest

wisdom, or experience of selfhood. This is the mystery of that toil and sorrow which are to lift man's earthly or outward life to an equality with his celestial or inward life; of those long-protracted pangs of intellectual labor, which ultimately bring forth a Divine fruit in the natural plane of the mind no less than the spiritual. In fine here lies the beginning of our social culture and discipline; of that persistent untiring devoted struggle on the part of the spiritual element in life — on the part of the WOMAN within us — to satisfy the craving of her stolid material mate after infinite delights, which is the meaning of all history, and which is Divinely prospered and fulfilled only in the social destiny of man.

This is the secret of Swedenborg's unequalled services to Philosophy, that he turns creation from an event in time and space antedating knowledge, and therefore totally uninteresting to human belief, into a most orderly development of our own historic consciousness; into an intimate outbirth of our own associated experience; turns it in fact into a most tender, protracted, and at last successful, wooing and consequent marriage, of the human by the Divine nature, in which no interest of the weaker party is overlooked or sacrificed, but on the contrary every interest is unswervingly respected, maintained in honor, and infinitely promoted. He reduces the orthodox conception of creation, as an event in space and time, transacted over our heads and without our intelligent privity, to

absurdity, or self-contradiction, because it makes the creature a mere will-of-the-wisp, by robbing him of soul, of selfhood, of that natural identity or fixity which alone is competent to base *his* spiritual individuality. Selfhood or identity is a composite not a simple fact. That is to say it is a fact of the strictest consciousness, implying the marriage of a common nature with a specific form. No form exists which is wholly unconscious or inanimate, though of course consciousness itself assumes infinitely diversified aspects: here a very diffuse and lethargic one, as in the mineral form of existence; there a very concentrated and energetic one, as in man: but in all its forms alike it announces the union of a common or identical substance with a specific or individual form.[1]

[1] We think the mineral existence unconscious, because it is so remote a form of consciousness from ours, that we can hardly reproduce it. But if we should accidentally fall from the roof of a house or any equal height, and be unfortunate enough to survive, we might by afterwards recalling to remembrance the sensation we felt during the fall, make an approximate estimate of the mineral consciousness. Of course we should have known it only in inverted and most revolting form: because as our personality alienates us to the greatest possible extent from the mineral consciousness, we cannot come into the conditions of that consciousness without the utmost violence to our own. But nevertheless by translating our negative human experience into the positive mineral one, or interpreting the intense and indeed agonizing moral revolt we feel under the circumstances, by the mere experience of inertia — or abandonment to the overpowering force of gravitation — which the mineral feels, we shall be able to compass a near view of the mineral consciousness, or picture to our intelligence the state of anæsthesia or drunkenness — *i. e.* nearly utter submergence of individual sensibility in a sense of diffused existence — which characterizes what we very absurdly call inorganic nature, or brute matter.

Selfhood then or existence utterly refuses to be conceived of as created, in the sense vulgarly attributed to that word, *i. e.* as denoting an outward exhibition of Divine power; because it invariably implies or presupposes the parentage of a common substance and a specific form. What sheer childishness to conceive of a tree, or a horse, or any other natural object, having been created by an arbitrary fiat of some superior power, and without the implication of a natural generation! But how absolutely shocking to conceive of moral existence as so created! It utterly outrages the truth of things to conceive of character, personality, as outwardly derived or conferred. Characteristic or personal existence is free existence; and freedom always means — unless it be employed as it frequently is to express simple jail-delivery or emancipation — the power of an inward life; that is, the union of an inward object and an outward subject.

Three sorts of freedom or life are known to us, each of which alike resolutely disowns an outward origin: 1. Physical or passive freedom, of which instinct is the symbol, and which consists in doing whatsoever the heart pronounces good: *i. e.* in having all the passions and appetites of one's nature in due or normal exercise: 2. Moral or active freedom, whose symbol is will, and which consists in doing whatsoever the intellect pronounces true, even if it should contradict what the heart feels to be good: 3. Spiritual or essential freedom, whose badge

is spontaneity, growing out of the reconciliation or marriage of good in the heart with truth in the understanding, and which consists accordingly in the total harmony of one's outward life with one's inward aspiration: *i. e.* in one's being precisely what one wishes to be, and seeming precisely what one is. These are the three universal modes of what we call freedom, selfhood, life, consciousness, in man; and it is obvious to a glance that each alike repugns the least outward dictation. You may indeed obstruct the manifestation of this freedom under any of its forms. You may by your conscious or unconscious tyranny debar it its due and adequate exercise: but you can neither give it nor take it away. It is God's own life in the subject, the enticing, endearing, ravishing Eve whom God alone quickens within him, radiant flesh of his flesh, most intimate bone of his bone; and he cleaves to it accordingly with a tenacity which makes it comparatively easy to renounce father and mother; *i. e.* turns the sacredest traditions of Church and State, when they set themselves against it, into empty or at best mercenary clamor.

Creation then considered as a physical procedure of God, as a work executed in space and time, is an unmitigated absurdity. Physical creation, which is the making one's being to derive from one's flesh and blood, or the making one's nature the ground not only of his identity or conscious existence, but also of his individuality or unconscious life, is tan-

tamount in conception to the exhaustion of the creator by the creature: the giver being inevitably finited *in se* by his gift, the receiver *in*-finited *in se*. Being is identical or one with itself. To suppose one being therefore outwardly conferring his own being upon another spatially and temporally distant from himself, is to allege the former's diminution in the exact ratio of the latter's enlargement. God's being is inseparable from Himself; is His perfection or character; so that in creating or giving being to another, He simply communicates Himself to that other. Thus both our natural selfhood or identity (considered as the base), and our spiritual individuality (considered as the superstructure, of God's work in creation), confess themselves mere transparent masks of the Divine presence in us: the one being that gorgeous many-colored visible temple of His abode, whither all the tribes of the earth go up to worship: the other that invisible holy of holies, where He dwells unapproached and unsuspected save by those alone who have been spiritually as well as naturally quickened, and who render Him consequently no ritual but an exclusively living devotion.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHAT will our existing religion and science say to these things? Neither of them is likely to admit with any too-ready complacency, that neither our finite nor our rational parts, neither our bodies nor our souls, neither our substantial identity with, nor our formal diversity from, all other existence, has the least basis outside of consciousness. Yet the truth is philosophically indisputable. Body and mind are both alike an unceasing spiritual communication — a perpetual living operation or miraculous creation — of God in our nature. It is manifest that God cannot create anything, cannot make anything be, save in so far as He communicates Himself to it. And just as evidently He cannot communicate Himself to anything, save in so far as the thing be previously adapted to the communication, be a form receptive of the communication. Now God being Himself the all of life, it is clear that the only form of life answering to His life or imaging His perfection, must be a composite or social form, must be as the good book alleges, both male and female: *i. e.* unite in itself the two elements of universality or identity and individuality: so that creation spiritually regarded amounts to this, namely: such

a restless and resistless motion of God's spirit in the depths of human nature, as will finally issue in a perfect society, fellowship, or brotherhood among men, in which whatsoever belongs to the collective life of its members shall receive the unfaltering allegiance of the individual life; and whatsoever belongs to the individual development of its members shall receive the unfaltering sustenance of the collective interest.

Neither religion nor science conceives of creation in this orderly plight; as this infinitely tender, solicitous, and reverential condescension of the Divine spirit to every abject need both of our common nature and our specific form. Religion is vitalized by sense, and sense affirms without misgiving the proper infinitude of Nature. Science is vitalized by reason, and reason affirms without misgiving the proper absoluteness of Man. Neither of them dreams that God Himself is so intimately and vitally present both in Nature and humanity, as to challenge to Himself exclusively the infinitude and absoluteness which they reveal. You are sure therefore to affront sense and reason, faith and science, with equal poignancy, when you deny the infinitude of the natural, and the absoluteness of the moral consciousness, by affirming that they both alike possess in themselves no objective but a purely subjective validity. Let us pause here a moment.

The problem which creation presents to the eye of the mind is this: How shall that which is intrinsically void of life — whose very

nature is not-to-be save in so far as being is perpetually given it by the bounty of another — attain to consciousness: *i. e.* to any such actual separation from its creative source as all selfhood implies, and is rationally indispensable indeed to its own experience of existence? What is selfhood? It is the feeling of life within one as one's own — that is, the feeling of one's proper infinitude — to the entire extent of one's natural identity; the feeling of life within one as one's own — *i. e.* the feeling of one's proper absoluteness — within the limits of one's rational individuality. Manifestly then existence or selfhood cannot be arbitrarily imposed, or outwardly conferred upon its subject by the will or the act of another, even if that other be God; but must be an inward or bosom experience of the subject bred of the strictest truth of the case, and reflecting such truth exclusively.

Here then is the hopeless bewilderment, both of faith and science, to reconcile this finite created selfhood with the infinite creative substance; or disconnect the omnipotent fountain with the derivative and utterly dependent stream in a manner so thorough, as shall insure their everlasting harmony by making it impossible that the former shall ever pinch or prove penurious to the latter, the latter ever swallow up or supplant the former. For if the strictest truth of the case give a created subject; then inasmuch as it is the nature of created things to be void of life in themselves and to depend on others for it, the created subject so given will be

able to attain to consciousness or the experience of existence, only so far evidently as the creative Love gives it natural organization: *i. e.* vivifies its intrinsic death or destitution of life, by the communication to it of His own immortality. And what right have either faith or science to anticipate Philosophy (which alone intelligently avouches the Divine infinitude) by alleging any such resources in the creative Love as qualify it to meet this exigency of the created nature? Evidently not the least right. The sole basis of faith is sense, and sense drowns the infinite in the finite. The sole basis of science is reason, and reason drowns the absolute in the relative. Both faith and science consequently, so long as they are uncontrolled by Philosophy, are totally unable to conceive the creative infinitude, and hence to suggest any such resources in Deity as alone suffice to account for creation. They are both alike prevented from formulating any doctrine of creation, by their omission to see in Nature the only thing which summons her into being, and justifies her apparition, namely: her unqualified subserviency to a higher life than her own; her absolutely indispensable uses to our social or spiritual manhood. They both alike concur in regarding Nature as the direct and finished product of creative power, so making the spiritual world, which is the universe of the human mind, fall within Nature, in place of making Nature fall exclusively within it.

In these circumstances one of two fatalities

impends: either the human mind, outraging its own profoundest instincts, must decline into Atheism, so denying creation altogether; or else, outraging its own invincible rationality, must accept Pantheism, so turning creation in any honest undebauched use of the term into a derisive will-of-the-wisp, or morbid exhalation of human fatuity. For evidently if we admit the Divine existence at all, then inasmuch as its very perfection — that which constitutes it Divine in a word — consists in its unity, in its being the all of life, it is irrational to conclude that there should be any other absolute existence. Derivative existence is in itself and of necessity simple zero, utterly formless and void, void both of inward substance and outward seeming, void in short of all identity and all individuality. Whatever it has of either of these things it can have only apparently in itself, and really in God. Absolutely therefore there can be no such form of life as the natural one: *i. e.* a form of life bearing so inverse an aspect towards the Divine infinitude, as to be entitled thereupon to a distinctive consciousness: and the unenlightened reason of man consequently stands aghast before the problem of the natural creation; being compelled to reject it honestly and outright by a profession of Atheism, or else to attempt circumventing it by a timid Pantheistic solution. For if such forms of life as are here contemplated do not and cannot exist absolutely or of themselves, and yet do actually exist to their own consciousness in the greatest profusion,

then the inference is clear, that this actual existence of theirs is involved in some higher form of life, *i. e.* is owing to some virtue of the creative Love, which Science is impotent to discover by the light of reason (though most competent to appreciate when discovered), and which Philosophy therefore, following the light of Revelation, brings to our knowledge.

Let my reader bear with me, if I seem to linger on this topic. I am sure his intellectual advantage will be consulted, if we perfectly estimate the part Religion has played in our intellectual evolution.

Religion exacts no strictly human or creative perfection in God, because it takes Nature as given in sense, *i. e.* as a final and not as an instrumental, achievement of the Divine omnipotence; as a result, and not as a process towards a result. It looks upon Nature as a substance in her own right; as an end, not as a means to an end; as a finished gem rather than the crude ore which embeds the gem; as being herself God's true creature, rather than the purely material and maternal investiture, by which the creature becomes built up and identified to his own consciousness. Science gives her no furtherance in this career, but only impediment. Science does nothing but exalt the concept of the finite as given in sense, into that of the relative as given in reason; so completing an intellectual basis for that rich demonstration of the Infinite in the finite, and of the Absolute in

the relative, which Philosophy will ultimately enact. Philosophy becomes able to throw a commanding light upon the origin of existence, only by heeding the voice of Revelation, which turns Nature from a principal into a mere accessory of the Divine creation; from the creature itself into a wondrous and exquisite mould of the creature. Until Philosophy come therefore to avouch and fulfil the intellectual promise both of religion and science, the human mind will be seen on the one hand declining, under the auspices of what calls itself Positive Science, into the helpless drivel of Atheism; on the other, under the patronage of German idealism, which is what now passes for Philosophy, into the stuck-up and conceited waiting-maid of Pantheism.

For how is it conceivable upon the *data* of reason, which in the absence of Philosophy are absolute over religion, that Nature should exist at all: that is, that there should be any actual form of life answering by antagonism to the Divine perfection: while yet the very possibility of consciousness suspends itself upon such existence? It would be easy enough doubtless for us rationally to conceive how — a suitable form being already extant or provided to the Divine hand, as clay is provided to the potter — the Divine life might inflow, and fill it with His own bliss to eternity. But no such form is provided to the Divine hand. The Divine skill is bound to give its creature conscious form as well as unconscious being or substance: is bound not

only to vivify the creature with His own vital spirit, but also to invest him previously with that unmistakable natural selfhood or identity, which shall make such vivification a valid fact of experience, an actual fact of history, and not a despicable figure of speech or verbal juggle. It is as if the potter should himself give being to the clay out of which, as well as conception to the form into which, his work is moulded. If any such creative relation as this on the part of the potter to his clay existed, the figure he moulds would be no longer artificial, that is, devoid of natural life or consciousness, but would on the contrary glow with selfhood.

Clearly then the only thing that saves creation from the odious slaver of Pantheism, the only thing that makes its flowing waters musical, and keeps its wandering breezes forever sane and sweet, is the ineffaceable truth of the creature's identity under whatever intensity of the creative influx and inhabitation. In himself, or naturally, the creature is but a form or image of Life, dependent every moment for all that he is and all that he enjoys upon the unstinted communication of that Life. Obviously therefore unless he present on his natural or maternal side a complete INVERSION of the creative perfection, nothing can guarantee the reality of creation; nothing can hinder it turning out an abject stifling sty of Pantheism. I say this is obvious; because, as we have seen, if the created form should exhibit any direct analogy with the creative substance, all basis

of discrimination would be lacking between itself and the inflowing Divine life; and with that of course all faculty of self-recognition, all possibility of consciousness. The sole possible basis of identity for the creature, the only conceivable ground for attributing distinctive character or selfhood to him, lies in his being in himself a direct contrast to the creator: empty where He is full, impotent where He is omnipotent, ignorant where He is omniscient, evil where He is good. Did he not possess this formal constitutional identity, were he not by nature the characteristic well-defined opposite of all Divine perfection, he could not possibly be a proper object of the creative Love: since the very distinction of that Love, regarded as infinite or pure of all infirmity, is that it is utterly void of self-love, having no respect to any worthiness in its object but what grows out of the object's utter want. It is no doubt very tolerable finite or creaturely love to love one's own in another, to love another for his conformity to oneself: but nothing can be in more flagrant contrast with the creative Love, all whose tenderness *ex vi termini* must be reserved only for what intrinsically is most bitterly hostile and negative to itself.

The truth cannot be otherwise. So long as God creates or gives being to the creature only by unreservedly communicating Himself to him, He must do so in a way not to overpower the creature or rob him of his proper identity, but on the contrary must allow him to expand to the rankest luxuriance of his nature. He is

bound to allow all the evil and falsity which exist potentially in the created nature to come to the surface, to come to the creature's consciousness by becoming actual: otherwise the creature must forever remain destitute of distinctive consciousness. When this consciousness is perfect; when the creature truly perceives the imperfection he is under by nature; when by an actual experience of life he perceives himself to be prone to all manner of iniquity; he becomes spiritually disengaged from his natural foundations, exchanges his native pride and obduracy for modesty and docility, and inwardly looks up to God for help. He is now no longer a mere abject creature of God, but his sympathetic associate or fellow; no longer a servant, but a son.[1]

[1] If I were by nature good instead of evil, I could not distinguish between the Divine good and my own, for all goodness is one: nor consequently exert the least spiritual grasp or appropriation of the inflowing Divine life, in which appropriation nevertheless my creation rigidly consists. In short, if I were good by nature and not by culture exclusively, good by generation and not by the strictest regeneration, good in myself or finitely as well as in God or infinitely; then good could never attract my aspiration, could never provoke my emulation: for no one aspires to what he already possesses, nor emulates that in another which reminds him only of himself. Of course all this evil in the creature is properly an incident of his natural consciousness merely, and has no manner of pertinency to his spiritual creation. It is a fact purely of his subjective constitution, pertaining to him only on his finite phenomenal side: and has no relation whatever to his spiritual individuality or the objective being which he has exclusively in God. It characterizes him as still uncreated so to speak, as still destitute of his true spiritual and Divinely-given form; and has no more relevancy to his perfected development than the umbilical cord of the fœtus has to the memory of the full-grown man.

But if Religion be incapable of hinting a philosophy of Nature, science labors under a greater disability even. For science has had a purely negative function with respect to religion; and it is only by sheer self-conceit on her part or a gross misconception of her proper subordination to Philosophy, that she is ever tempted to reconstruct the ancient faiths by giving them a rational basis. Her whole business on earth, or in the evolution of the human mind, may be thus formulated: the gradual exhaustion or draining off of religion as a doctrine of Nature, in order to its permanent resuscitation by Philosophy as a life of Man. In other words the church as it has hitherto existed in purely typical or isolated institutional form, will disappear in the progress of our scientific culture, only to reappear as a perfect human society or fellowship, animated and held together by no doctrinal *consensus* of any sort on the part of its members, but by their cordial unforced and filial acknowledgment of the Divine Name as alone adequate to explain the stupendous marvel and mystery of Life. The office of Science accordingly in this great work of social reconstruction, is that purely of a pioneer clearing the ground of the wild undergrowths of sense, or turning it up to the influence of light and air, and so preparing it for the endless beneficent inseminations of Philosophy. Men of science constitute the corps of sappers and miners, who with glittering axe on shoulder and stout leathern apron before them, precede the advance of the grand army

of humanity, to batter down every fortress of organized error, bridge over every ditch of superstition, and drain off every marsh of conventional prejudice, which threatens to impede its victorious footsteps.

Thus the office of science in our philosophic renovation, though most honest and indispensable, is yet plainly negative not positive. Her whole business is to undo the shackles which sense imposes upon the religious instinct: so leaving it eternally free to soar according to its inmost spiritual aptitudes: by no means to replace them with the far weightier because infinitely more impertinent fetters imposed by reason. For if the forms of Nature do not and cannot exist of their own right, and yet do actually exist in universal measure, it is clear that the secret of their origin is quite as impenetrable to Science as to faith, to Reason as to sense, and must even more hopelessly elude those who confide in her conceited oracles: for he is far likelier to prove a wise man in the long run, whose negations are fed by his beliefs, than he whose beliefs are starved upon his negations. The truth is that Nature owes her origin exclusively to the proper infinitude of God's love as that love is displayed in Man: and Science dealing only with the finite and relative, willingly abandons to Philosophy the task of avouching the Infinite and Absolute.

Such is the exact formula of our mental evolution as a race: Religion, Science, Philosophy. These are so many comprehensive symbols to

our intelligence of the gradual development of the human form in creation; of the orderly and complete extrication of the human mind from the bondage of nature and the tyranny of custom. They mark so many successive stages of our gradual formation or redemption out of the utter vacuity and imbecility which we have in ourselves or naturally, into the perfectness of knowledge goodness and power which we have in God, or spiritually: *first the blade, then the ear, and afterwards the full corn in the ear.* Our intelligence begins in sense; because being creatures — that is, being destitute of life in ourselves — we cannot possibly have any intuition of life, but must be gradually educated to its perception. Our grasp of it can never be absolute, but is always and of necessity empirical. Consciousness always identifies us with the outward and finite; unless therefore the infinite and eternal life we have in God actualize itself to our consciousness, by coming down to our very senses, it can never be appropriated by us; and thus might better have remained unheard of. The highest truths of the mind, which are those of the Divine infinity, eternity, and omnipotence, are bound first of all to seek and find ratification in the lowest plane of the mind, which is sense, under penalty of being excluded from the mental circulation altogether, or confessing themselves no organic parts of the mind. The dogmas of a purely literal or physical creation redemption and providence, house these great spiritual substances until the race is sufficiently

quickened to discern them in their own lustre: so that unless our intelligence had had a preliminary initiation into the mysteries of wisdom by this rude cradling, it would have remained forever incapable of the slightest spiritual apprehension. In a word the very inmost and most celestial heights of experience in man grow out of, and are irreversibly tethered to, his lowest sensuous consciousness.[1]

In themselves however these literal dogmas are nothing more than a cradle for the intellect, or constitute a purely initiatory form of mental development, since they all proceed upon the postulate of a strictly physical creation, and regard Nature herself as the proper image of God. In this state of things God is of course practically conceived of as the most finite of beings; *i. e.* as involving the most of space and time in his existence: thus as a being of boundless physical dimensions, of transcendent material substance and majesty: all the visible types of nature lending themselves with equal alacrity to avouch His qualities. The fury of the tiger, the gentleness of the lamb; the subtlety of the serpent, the innocence of the dove; the splendors of light, the terrors of darkness; seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, the cradle and the grave, the fruitful field and the barren waste,

[1] The highest seraph accordingly, whatever be the miracle of his endowments, must always exhibit some point of contact and sympathy with the lowest clod: must always acknowledge some gross enveloping cuticle in which he and the clod are equally at home: joint pensioners of the same impartial bounty, children of the same exuberant and indiscriminate magnanimity.

the modest valley and the frowning mountain, the devouring fire and the vivifying heat, the gentle rains and the devastating floods, all alike furnish apt indisputable emblems of the Divine sovereignty, and suggest by turns to the devout imagination the wildest hopes of His personal goodness, or the most frenzied fear of His personal malignity. Natural religion is thus the citadel of superstition. It is the acknowledgment of a power in Nature superior to nature, yet spiritually commensurate with all her processes and productions. It makes Nature the adequate temple of God, and bids us expand before His benignity in the sunshine, or cower before His malignity in the tempest. In short it affirms the absoluteness of Nature; her literal sacredness as a Divine revelation; and consequently wherever its influence is unimpeded by a scientific reaction of the faculties, or a salutary scepticism of the intellect, it plunges its votary into grovelling fetichism; making him worship a literal Divine good in the lasciviousness of the bull, a literal Divine truth in the venom of the snake. Were not science at hand accordingly to relieve the deadly blight thus operated by religion upon the faculties, and so prepare the way to a philosophic recognition of creation, the intellect would expire of inanition, and human life die out in despair.

We may say then that Natural religion — which is the acknowledgment of a Divine power immediately present in Nature, and directly operating her effects — is bound as the

intellect of the race matures to give way to science, which declares that God is present in Nature only mediately, or operates her effects solely through the instrumentality of man.

For erelong the contents of the senses become sifted, and the intuitions of the individual reason give place to the sober and orderly methods of science, or associated observation. Light becomes gradually divided from dark in knowledge, good from evil, substance from shadow, reality from appearance, truth from fact. And it is precisely in this critical or sceptical power of the mind that science consists. At her fullest she is a mere disintegration of natural religion, or what is the same thing, a remorseless refutation of Nature's absoluteness in the interests of human freedom. And the method she takes therefore from her very inception, is, to exhaust Nature of personality or life by proving her rigid subjection to law; that is, demonstrating the universality of cause. She gradually demonstrates the pure relativity or rationality of all natural forms; so denuding them of that absolute prestige which they wear to sense, and which alone justifies the ascription of a Divine authority to them. Nature is now discovered to be far more potent to the imagination in gross than in detail, being totally unable to vindicate to the analytic reason the overpowering attitude she puts on to sense, or the carnal reason. In short, the senses are now seen to be hopelessly superstitious; so that science, in place of affirming their testimony, is bound as she grows more

familiar with existing order, incessantly to reprove and correct it. Thus the ruby, the rose, the horse, the grass, the water, when privately interrogated, or viewed apart from the overwhelming natural identity to which each in its degree contributes, confess themselves lacking in that strictly moral or individual force of which Science is in quest under all her researches, and which she regards as the highest or absolute form of natural existence. They one and all proclaim themselves forms of use not of life; phenomenal forms not substantial ones; forms of servitude in truth not of freedom; and hence however imposing they may be to sense, they instantly lay off all prestige of Divinity to the reason.

Thus science renders the great intellectual transition between Religion and Philosophy possible, by gradually refuting the sensuous judgments of the mind in regard to creation, or proving them superstitious. It gradually divests Nature of the rigidly fixed or finite character which sense ascribes to her, and invests her with a supremely rational or orderly significance. Sense takes for granted the essential finiteness of all existence. It supposes the horse to be the horse in himself, and irrespectively of his relations to other existence; the sheep the sheep, and the rose the rose, in themselves and without reference to the relation of unity they bear to the rest of Nature: it supposes that pleasure is pleasure in itself and irrespectively of pain, light light irrespectively of

dark, bitter bitter irrespectively of sweet, good good irrespectively of evil, high high irrespectively of low, and so forth: so that Natural Religion which is the child of sense by Faith, in order to conceive of Divine things has only to intensify these finite existences indefinitely. Reason however antagonizes sense. It denies the essential finiteness of natural existence, by affirming its strictly rational character; inasmuch as everything that exists does so only by virtue of its implication in other things. But then, although it denies finiteness to natural things by thus endowing them with an exclusively relative character, it goes on itself to make this relative character of all existence absolute in God's sight, so affirming a purely rational or moral Deity. Reason conceives that the difference we see between horse and rose, between pebble and mountain, between high and low, light and dark, good and evil, bitter and sweet, painful and pleasant, are absolute differences, characterizing God's vision as well as ours. It consequently reorganizes religion upon a purely rational basis; making it reflect no longer the wholly arbitrary natural divisions which sense alleges between opposing families and races of men, but those subtler personal or relative differences which exalt one man above another, and which imply the greatest possible individual merit and demerit in the Divine sight.

If science consequently had the least legitimate pretension to furnish the final evolution of the mind, or, what is the same thing, if

reason should constitute the true basis of intercourse between God and man, hope would be limited in the human bosom to the lowest or most conceited persons; *i. e.* to such as could most easily assure themselves of their own superior merit to others; while despair would be the lot of all those whose natural modesty, or cultivated sweetness, might lead them to prefer others to themselves. A scientific religion indeed, that is to say, a religion which claims exclusively rational sanctions, is a philosophic absurdity. It may be tolerated as a criticism upon established superstition; but it will never succeed in enlisting the disinterested respect, much less the enthusiasm, of its followers; because it subjects the heart to the inspiration of the head, and makes worship a prompting of duty rather than affection; an affair of the lips and not of the life.

Science is thus — although she herself does not suspect the fact, and is consequently very nearly as arrogant and absolute in her pretensions, as Religion had previously been in hers — is thus nothing more than an indispensable middle-term between Religion and Philosophy: being negatively related to the former interest, and positively related to the latter. Religion accounts for creation by a simple hypothesis, the lawless character of the Divine will: it makes creation a mere passive or brute display of Divine force. Philosophy exacts a composite hypothesis to explain it. It makes creation a strict ratio or mean between two

extremes, or alleges the indissoluble unity of infinite and finite in every fact of existence. Science accordingly, as the bridge of transition from one to the other, is bound, first, to chase God out of Nature (so relating herself negatively to Religion) by, secondly, bringing Nature itself within man, (so relating herself positively to Philosophy). For Philosophy considered as the culmination of our intellectual progress means the conversion into life of whatsoever has hitherto been merely doctrine; thus it implies the decease of religion in natural form and its revival in spiritual form exclusively; or its disappearance as a truth of nature and its subsequent and sole worthy resurrection as a life of man. Philosophy is a demonstration of the Infinite within the finite, of the Absolute within the relative; but this demonstration will be perfect of course, only in so far as the finite and relative have been previously ascertained by an analysis of Nature so thorough and unsparing, as shall forever suppress all doubt upon the subject. Now science is the instrument of this analysis. Its most concise and most comprehensive definition is the research of the Relative within the Finite. It is the child of Natural Religion, and comes into the world hearing its parent say, God creates all things: an infinite presence subtends all the facts of Nature. With no misgiving Science sets out upon the search after this reputed infinite whom all nature attests, but finds it nowhere. Nature exhibits absolutely no trace

of it whatsoever. On the contrary the footsteps of the Finite abound everywhere excluding the infinite; and to trace these footsteps home soon becomes the sole solicitude of science. This home is found only in moral existence, that is in man. The human form sums up all the relativity of nature; exhibits the unity of all her opposites; moral existence being the only truly rational or unitary form of existence science is able to discover. What science sees in nature accordingly is never God but man; that is to say, it decrees the universality of law or order throughout the entire realm of finite life, and the consequent exclusion of the infinite; thus making it incumbent upon Philosophy to give the religious instinct a higher intellectual evolution, or else leave it barren forever.

Philosophy accordingly stands ready when science has finished her critical or negative function, to assume the positive office to which the latter has proved herself plainly incompetent, that, namely of reconstructing religion, or putting it on a permanent because living basis. Philosophy denies the absoluteness which science under the guidance of reason ascribes to personal existence, by resolving the personally good and personally evil man quite equally into a higher æsthetic unity, consummate fruit of the Divine operation in human nature: so vacating the only imaginable ground of a scientific religion. For if persons be not absolute: if, as Philosophy affirms, the personally good man is not really but only apparently good of

himself, and the personally evil man only apparently and not really evil of himself — both the good of the one and the evil of the other referring themselves wholly to the contrasted relation in which they severally stand towards a third or superior neutral and unitary form of manhood — then clearly no merit can attach to the one in the Divine sight and no demerit to the other; and the responsibility which reason ascribes to them, instead of being absolute, turns out a mere provisional necessity of our imperfect social development. Thus it is only as we become socially and æsthetically posited that we exhibit, according to Philosophy, that perfect fusion or marriage of good and evil in a new and Divinely-given personality which is absolutely our own, and which therefore becomes an all-sufficient basis for any amount of spiritual intercourse and sympathy between us and our Maker.

Human history then has preëminently a subjective significance; has primarily a formative scope and intention. Its purpose is to bring man to a proper acquaintance with himself, and so to induct him into a true knowledge of God; to make us conscious in the first place of the divinity which is astir in our own nature, and then and thereby make us capable of recognizing God as He is in Himself. Now religion which is the instinctual *essor* of our perfected intelligence, the earliest or nascent stage of our mental history, is the heart of the mind, and holds its head and feet, or the two factors of our

perfected consciousness, God and Nature, in chaotic solution: only because the subsequent scientific extrication of these latent quantities from each other's grasp, and their eventual philosophic reconciliation in a new and unitary form of life, are precisely what will constitute the entire mental growth of the race, the sum total of its intellectual consciousness. Religion confounds infinite with finite, God with nature, spiritual with carnal, only for our sake, or because the gradual scientific disentanglement and subsequent philosophic distribution of these quantities in a living or harmonic consciousness, are what will constitute our complete spiritual creation. Thus even as the kingly oak is wrapped up in the humble acorn upon which the swine feed and are fattened, the endless intellectual development of man is all contained by anticipation in the bosom of his most sensuous Faith; in those most rude and crude and general dogmas of a literal Divine creation redemption and providence which constitute not only the best theology, but for a long time also the only science of the race. The very possibility of intellect would have been defeated, unless the mind had been husked in this primitive dogmatic drapery: unless every interest of its eventual majestic unity had been previously met and formulated — had been previously gathered up and stored away, so to speak — in these rude germs, these tough theologico-scientific roots, of a literal or physical Creation, Fall, and Redemption, of man: the first term vindicating the

infinite paternal element in our consciousness, God; the second, the finite maternal element, Nature; the third, that perfect eventual reconciliation which these antagonist elements are to undergo in the Divine NATURAL Man, or the bosom of our perfected consciousness. Intellect altogether consists in the ability to separate what is superior in knowledge from what is inferior: what is rightfully prior and commanding, from what is rightfully posterior and subordinate: and if accordingly such separation had taken place without our scientific privity, or in advance of our intellectual consciousness, we should obviously have lacked all mental fecundation, have remained forever void of intellect, cut off from the pith and marrow of our rational personality.

The evolution of science succeeds that of religion, because science furnishes the necessary body to the mind, the indispensable mother-earth upon which its feet are planted; while religion constitutes its animating soul, the caressing atmospheric heavens which encircle its head.[1] Science is the research of organized or relative existence; and her empire consequently includes within itself the entire realm of the outward and finite, whatever is embraced in the universe of sense. As we have called religion the heart of the mind, we may call science its lungs; her function being to separate what is private, spiritual, infinite in knowledge, or the mental circulation, from what is public, material,

[1] See Appendix, Note H.

finite: so preparing the former for that practical supremacy which is to accrue to it under the *régime* of Philosophy. Science arterializes the blood of the mind, which is knowledge, by divesting it of the deciduous attributes it gathers from sense. Her office is to spiritualize or freshen the mental circulation, by exalting its venous blood, which is sensible experience, into arterial blood, which is rational belief. Sense exhibits life to us so stripped of its rightful infinitude, so drenched of its essential divinity, as to make it very nearly vapid and worthless. It holds soul and body, substance and form, spiritual and material, in such inverted relation, as to give the lower element immense advantage over the higher; as practically to aggrandize it indeed beyond measure, and give it infinitude. Nature is not God's true creature, which is Man, but only the mould of that creature. Accordingly if the physical element in consciousness, the element of identity, should permanently dominate the spiritual element, its element of individuality, it would in the end altogether consume and obliterate it. Science obviates this fatality by shifting knowledge from a sensuous to a rational basis, in demonstrating that creation is not a product of blind force, or arbitrary will, but of consummate order or law. If science did not thus assiduously purge the mental induction of the impurities it gathers from sense, all these vicious things must be incessantly restored to the circulation, not to impart health and joy and peace to the mind, but ever-growing irritation,

disease, and death. Science accordingly eliminates from knowledge this sensual sediment, this garbage of the gutters, which it derives from our spiritual immaturity, in order that being thus aerated and defecated it may no longer pull down and destroy the mind, but renew it with immortal youth. In short her whole business is to convert sensible knowledge into rational belief, facts of sense into truths of reason, and so keep unimpaired that discrimination of high from low, of heaven from earth, of God from nature, upon which the reconciling mission of Philosophy is absolutely contingent.

Philosophy is the completed or living form of the mind, its presiding cerebral unity, its nervous quickening spirit, which perpetually empowers both heart and lungs, and compels them into her own strictest allegiance. Our true life or consciousness lies in the perfect union of infinite and finite. It is the marriage-fusion or unity of elements which, in themselves or intrinsically, are so discordant and unequal, as to be incapable of combining directly, and are consequently held together only under the coercion of some third or neutral power.[1] Philosophy, then, as representing our consummate intellect-

[1] True or spiritual marriage never takes place between equals, but on the contrary always alleges a hierarchical distribution of the parties to it, such as is imaged in the Atomic theory, and is legalized in the institution of civil marriage, which gives the husband social priority to the wife. If the parties to a marriage were strictly equal, *i. e.* unisexual, there would be no prolification; because prolification implies not the equilibrium of its constitutive elements, but their most intimate and vital fusion.

ual development, our complete mental unity or personality, has it for her exclusive business to coördinate these conflicting elements, or harmonize Religion and Science, God and Nature. This she does by sublimating religion or giving it infinitude, as having exclusive reference to what is spiritual in life, or regulating the relations of the individual soul to God; and by precipitating science, or giving it bounds, by relegating it exclusively to the care of our social interests, or those relations between man and man, and man and nature, which alone express, alone embody, and alone empower, the relation of the individual soul to God. Philosophy is thus that veritable firmament or expanse in the midst of the waters, which separates the waters that are under the firmament from the waters that are above the firmament. Unless this separation had taken place: unless religion, which is the doctrine of God in Nature, and science which is the doctrine of Man in Nature, had been first perfectly discriminated and then perfectly reconciled in Philosophy, which is the doctrine of the God-man or of infinite and finite in complete union, we should either have been forever void of intellectual consciousness, and remained the filthiest of filthy aborigines to the end of the chapter; or else have become so inflated with the pride of a superficial intelligence, as to lose erelong the tradition of a common human heart.

CHAPTER XXV.

But we must hurry to a close.

The abstract formula of our mental growth as a race, which we have just been considering, namely: Religion, Science, Philosophy: would be worthless, if it did not translate itself into the facts of our visible experience, or authenticate itself by every actual detail of human history. What we call history is only an instinctive effort of the common or associated mind of the race, to put on form, to come to self-consciousness, to realize its own majestic unity, by means of the purchase afforded it in the experience of the individual bosom. And as this great tendency formulates itself to our apprehension in the three intellectual symbols just cited, so of course history as the expression of such tendency, as the product of this interior mental evolution, must exhibit a form in exact correspondence with them.

In point of fact this is what history does. History is all summed up in the three great interests of Church, State, and Society; or the ecclesiastical, the political, and the social life of man: the first representing his barbaric aspect, his religious consciousness, which posits him as a proper subject of nature, full of essential ego-

tism and rapacity, and therefore at an infinite remove from God; the second representing his civic aspect, or his rational mind, which posits him as a moral subject under law to his fellow-man in consequence of such egotism and rapacity; the third alone representing his truly human aspect, or his perfected philosophic consciousness, which posits him as a member of a perfect society or brotherhood, and hence emancipates him from any obliged allegiance either to church or state, by putting him in the frankest practical amity, in the intensest living or spiritual unity, with God and his fellow-man.

In other words the entire machinery of man's destiny on earth, consists in that well-known duplex movement of the Divine Providence which we summarily denominate CHURCH and STATE or religion and politics: the former a descending or centrifugal movement, the latter an ascending or centripetal one; the one giving us death, the other affording us a *quasi* or temporary redemption from it: but both alike tending permanently and irresistibly to generate and coalesce in a third or orbicular movement which we call SOCIETY, and which glorifies them both beyond their heart's desire, because it carries them both out infinitely beyond their individual promise or aspiration. The Church stamps man as naturally corrupt and infirm by virtue of his finite constitution; the State thereupon subjects him to personal discipline and correction, by virtue of his rational consciousness: Society alone presents him absolved alike from natural infirmity,

and moral reproach, by the joint unstinted fellowship of God and his kind. History we may say then is the skin of the mind, its ultimate tissue or common covering, binding in one its several viscera of heart, lungs, and brain: Church, State, and Society being the outward forms under which this great unseen trinity of powers stand cloaked and represented.

History, it is evident, owes its supernatural character, its controlling power over Nature — whatsoever distinguishes it from mere natural growth and decay — in a word owes its strictly human and progressive quality, to the truth of man's most unequal parentage: to the fact of his being the joint and equal offspring of an infinite father (God), and a finite mother (Nature). One sees at a glance that an infinite thesis and a finite antithesis entail a wholly unexampled synthesis; and man's destiny accordingly is never to be gauged by stupidly nor yet conceitedly ignoring its major premise: which nevertheless is what religion and science habitually do. The truest and most comprehensive formula of History is, that it is the persistent and at last successful effort of the paternal Divine element in consciousness to assert its essential primacy, and reduce the merely constitutive, or maternal natural element to its just subordination. History exhibits the natural, maternal, or constitutive element in creation, succumbing and giving way to the demands of the paternal or creative element, to such an extent as that what is strictly individual and human in life becomes finally

extricated from the grasp of what is common and animal, and permanently endowed with its more or less complete supremacy. It shows us human life turning out a ceaseless process of elimination or rejection, by which every trait of resemblance to the infirm natural mould becomes gradually changed, into an image of the infinite spiritual substance from which both mould and form proceed. It represents the evolution of the creature's destiny, or his natural formation in the Divine image, as a graduated or composite movement, first downward or radical, giving him fixity by developing in him the intensest consciousness of community with his kind; then upward or educative, giving him the utmost spiritual expansion out of that root. Our natural history may be defined in fact to be a pure process of redemption, or spiritual formation, consisting first in giving us conscious finite maternity, but only in order that that consciousness may prove rigidly and unalterably ministerial to our conscious infinite paternity. Hence a literal cosmogony is philosophically bound, in order to symbolize and vindicate the eternal truth of creation, to present it in this strictly orderly aspect: that is to say, is bound in the first place to posit an all-enveloping chaos or maternity; and then to exhibit the successive extrication of the true Divine creature from this carnal confinement or embodiment, through all the stages of mineral existence or body, vegetable growth and animal motion, up to the full evolution of the human form in which creation culminates and closes.

Thus Nature is the mother of the creature, giving him requisite finiteness or body; just as the marble may be said to be the mother of the statue, as giving it visible incorporation or fixity. But what would you think of a statue which was conspicuous chiefly for its material, or for the part its mother played in it? What would your estimate of the statue be, if the substance out of which it was fashioned challenged more attention than the plastic power of the sculptor over that substance? Would you not at once pronounce it faithless to the fundamental canon of Art, which is the supremacy of form to substance? Unquestionably. For Art — viewed as the distinctively feminine evolution of human activity, in which freedom supplants force, or what is spiritual, individual, private, governs what is natural, common, public — makes Nature as furnishing the material in every work, purely ancillary and subservient to the Artist as furnishing its form, under penalty of defeating the work or rendering it imperfect.

Yet precisely this is the fatuity of the distinctively religious mind, that it allows the inferior physical element in consciousness to dominate the superior psychical element; so that practically the influence of the finite mother is omnipotent over the offspring, while that of the infinite father is compelled into the rudest vassalage. Religion, and our ordinary slipshod science as well, habitually interprets my spiritual individuality by my natural identity, or makes my soul to derive from my body; just as if you should

attribute the statue to the marble and not to the sculptor. Undoubtedly the marble gives *substance* or body to the sculptor's conception; but no one dreams that it also gives form or *soul* to that conception. On the contrary it is habitually pliant to the sculptor's demands, *and* abjectly receives whatever form he wishes to impress upon it. So precisely with my *natural* identity, or the consciousness I derive from Nature. It is the pliant marble merely upon which the Divine artist stamps the image of His spiritual perfection. It gives visible body to the creative conception, but it no more animates or gives it invisible soul, than the marble animates the statue. I may, it is true, be physically diseased to the extent of rendering me idiotic, or defeating my spiritual possibilities. But clearly this is not the rule. The rule is that my physical constitution serve as a mere pedestal or basis to my spiritual enfranchisement; and if the rule be inoperative in any case, the result is in no way attributable to Nature's obduracy, but only to that contented myopy — with respect to God's presence in our nature — into which unhappily we are all more or less betrayed by the prevalence of a superstitious faith and a sceptical science.

When the common people interpret creation as a making "all things out of nothing," what is their meaning? I do not ask their conscious meaning, for this is pretty sure to be wrong; but their unconscious meaning, which is pretty sure to be right. They mean to say that God

alone gives being to man naturally no less than spiritually: that the very nature of the creature is such as to deny him being, so that if he be created at all, his nature itself is to be redeemed or overcome in the first place. The nature of the creature as a creature is not to be, just as that of the creator is to be: so that so far as his nature is concerned he is absolutely nothing: without form and void of substance. His nature is to derive all his being from another; to be absolutely incapable of life in himself. If therefore he have conscious existence or selfhood, it can only be by a Divine vivification of his nature, operated without his privity or concert, while he is asleep, as the scriptures express it. "By the deep sleep" which fell upon Adam, and in which God took one of his ribs and built it into a woman, is signified, says Swedenborg, "that state into which man is let so that he may appear to possess selfhood: which state is likened to sleep, because whilst in it he knows no other than that he lives, thinks, speaks, and acts of himself."[1]

"It is believed," he says elsewhere, "by almost every one that a man thinks and wills from himself, and thence speaks and acts from himself. How indeed can any one believe otherwise, unless he be enlightened, when the appearance of his doing these things is so strong that it noway differs from the reality, when yet that reality is impossible? — In this sense, the sense in which selfhood is commonly understood

[1] Arc. Cel., 147.

(as manifesting an inherent faculty of willing and thinking), no man has any selfhood."[1]

"Man's selfhood is indeed a mere dead nothing, although to him it seems a something; in fact seems everything. Whatever lives in man derives from the Lord, and if this were abstracted, he would drop dead as a stone; for man is only an organ receptive of life. Real selfhood belongs to the Lord alone; and from this is vivified the selfhood of man."[2]

"That man's selfhood is in itself dead, or that no one has any life of himself, is shown so clearly in the world of spirits, that evil spirits who love nothing but self, and obstinately insist that they live of themselves, are convinced of the contrary by sensible experience, and forced to confess it. It has been specially permitted me now for several years to become acquainted with the human selfhood, and it has been granted me to perceive clearly that of myself I could think nothing, but that every idea of thought entered by influx, and lastly how and whence this influx entered. He therefore who supposes that he lives of himself cherishes a mistaken judgment, and in consequence appropriates to himself evil and falsity, which he would never do if his belief were formed according to the real truth of the case."[3] "When such people are asked what it is to have no self-originating principle of action, they reply that it is the same thing as not existing."[4]

[1] Divine Providence, 308, 309.
[2] Arc. Cel., 149.
[3] Ibid., 150.
[4] Ibid., 206.

"That a man lives from the Lord alone, is evident from this, that there is one sole essence, one sole substance, and one sole form, from which are all the essences substances and forms that are created. This same truth is confirmed by living perception among the angels, especially the superior angels. These are to all appearance as if they lived from themselves; yea, more so than the inferior angels: which results from the fact that in proportion as any one is inwardly conjoined with the Lord, he seems to himself more distinctly his own, though reflectively it is more clear to him that he is the Lord's."[1]

"Man's feeling that he is his own life and his thinking so, are from fallacy, or because the principal is only perceived in the instrument as one with it."[2]

Thus, according to Swedenborg, man and angel are permitted to feel that their life is their own, their self hood or freedom absolute, because otherwise they would have no basis of spiritual conjunction with God; for clearly God cannot be conjoined with anything out of His own image and likeness. By this permission they are enabled consciously to reciprocate the Divine love, and so become immortal. But the feeling is in itself deceptive and requires the regulation of the reflective understanding. For our freedom or self-hood is really not absolute, but rigidly conditional. Swedenborg shows us to be so closely associated with spiritual societies as to our affection and thought, that if we were forcibly sep-

[1] Divine Providence, 158. [2] Divine Love and Wisdom, 4.

arated from them, we should fall down dead: "our life," as he says, "remaining only in that inmost form by which we are humanly avouched and rendered immortal."[1] "Neither angel nor devil has any power in himself. If he had the least, heaven would fall to pieces, hell become a chaos, and Nature perish."[2] "Nothing whatever acts from itself, but from something still prior; thus nothing at all acts but by communication from a First which does act of itself and which is God. There is thus but one sole Life, and this incapable of being created, though it is eminently capable of communicating itself to forms organically apposite to its reception. All the objects in the created universe, even to the most minute of all objects, are such receptive forms. Many believe that the soul is itself a spark of life; thus that man since he lives from his soul, lives from his own life, or of himself and not by an influx of life from God. From such a belief proceed innumerable and abhorrent fallacies; as, for example, that God in creation transfers and transcribes himself into men, and hence that every man is a sort of deity that lives of himself," &c. &c.[3]

If these things be true, and that they are so seems obvious to common sense, it becomes perfectly clear that however necessary a part our freedom or selfhood plays in reference to our

[1] Athanasian Creed, 58. See also The Divine Love and Wisdom, 114, 115, 116, and indeed *passim*.

[2] Ath. Creed, 34.

[3] Intercourse of Soul and Body, II. See Appendix, Note I.

immortal spiritual conjunction with God, it is after all wholly subsidiary to that end; is in fact altogether involved in it, and by no means evolved from it. That is to say, history (which is the sphere of our free activity) is not an event supervening upon our creation, and introducing new and unexpected complications between creature and creator. By no means. It is on the contrary in its utmost scope and breadth, a pure incident of our creation, being nothing more nor less in fact than the gradual and sure working out of that great spiritual truth to our actual consciousness: so developing us to the measure of the creative perfection, and filling us with His beatitude. It is sheer atheism to conceive otherwise; to conceive of any real independence of the creature with regard to the creator, as at all possible. What sort of a creator could he be said to be, whose creature had power to renounce the being it owed exclusively to him? What sort of creative excellence would he exhibit, whose hold upon his creature was contingent upon the creature's pleasure: whose sole capacity to bless his creature could be permanently compromised and even altogether frustrated by the latter's indisposition to be blessed? No doubt it is impossible to give immortal life to a stone, a cabbage, or a skunk, because these are servile forms of existence: no doubt, in other words, that certain conditions of freedom or selfhood in the creature, are requisite to base this gift on the part of the creator. But how exquisitely puerile it is to conceive that what

is the mere indispensable condition of an event, should have power to adjourn the event! How grossly contradictory to represent the exact method of a certain achievement — the method of its execution — as at the same time the method of its defeat!

It cannot be denied of course that human freedom, human selfhood, is a very absolute and unyielding quantity in incompetent hands; but not in those of God almighty. Pius Ninth, whom the progress of events and his own strictly logical obduracy have reduced to the dimensions of a mere scold, has no power to placate it in the interest of established religion. And the sombre sanguinary mime, who has been Providentially allowed to vault for a day upon the throne of France — as if to disabuse men of any illusions they might have indulged in regard to some possible compromise between Truth and Falsity: between unlimited Freedom on the one hand and arbitrary Authority on the other: by showing them how much more truculent and unveracious, how much more disastrous to the peace of the world and offensive to its decencies, a brand-new self-constituted despotism is sure to be, than any even of the oldest and most dissolute church-anointed ones — is equally unskilled to cajole it in the interest of political quackery. But God almighty is quite a different personage and power from any of these. He harmlessly wields and directs the very lightning by which they are now mocked, now scathed and consumed. Man's amplest selfhood or freedom is

His unlimited handmaid, born of the most vital needs of His infinite Love; and it can no more fail to image His great perfection, than the obedient marble can fail to reflect the genius of Phidias.

In fact Nature is infinitely more pliant to the Divine will — infinitely more sensitive to the Divine manipulation — than marble can ever possibly be to the hand of the sculptor. For the relation between God and Nature in our spiritual creation, is a strictly conjugal one, implying not the enforced but the spontaneous subjection of the wife to the husband. The relation of the sculptor to his marble, or of the artist universally to his material is rather that of a lover to his mistress, in which the subjection of the latter to the former is still wilful and capricious. The perfect marriage fusion which exists between infinite and finite, between God and Nature, with respect to our regeneration, insures us a living maternity as well as paternity, and hence makes us forms of life naturally no less than spiritually. No such relation as this exists between the sculptor and his marble. The statue is a wholly artificial form, begotten without Nature's concert or even consent, being forcibly imposed upon her substance. We on the other hand are never artificial save when the exigencies of priest and king — the needs of a corrupt Church and a decaying State — warp us from our natural integrity. There is thus no community or identity between the statue and any of Nature's forms. Nature ignores and

abhors every form which is outwardly impressed upon her, or whose development is due to Force. She produces only forms of life or consciousness, whose development is from within outwards. The marble is spiritually uncreated by the sculptor; that is to say, is wholly unpervaded or unvivified by his distinctive genius; and he consequently is obliged to subjugate it forcibly or from without to his will: the offspring of his operation being of course destitute of consciousness, because destitute of living maternity. But nature is all Divinely instinct and pregnant with her offspring before they are born, undergoing any amount of sympathetic suffering indeed while the period of gestation endures; so that we are full of self-consciousness by natural right even, or right of the mother, and feel ourselves identical with all her force. And what is more the Divine artist in shaping our subsequent spiritual extrication, never overrides nor outrages in the slightest degree this natural consciousness on our part, but on the contrary becomes able to woo it and win it over to his superior friendship and fellowship, only by disowning every method but that of the most tender and assiduous conciliation.

Unquestionably there is this obvious and enormous difference between the statue, regarded as the product of man's compulsory power over Nature, and man himself, regarded as the product of God's spiritual presence within Nature. Nobody can be more willing and indeed alert than I am to establish this difference in all its

legitimate extent. But great as the difference manifestly is, it sinks into absolute nothing as arguing in us any independence towards God which the statue does not equally claim with respect to the sculptor. In fact I maintain that human life is not only just as pliant to the Divine hand as clay is pliant to the hands of the potter, and just as incapable of resisting His will, but in the long run is infinitely more so.

For this life of Nature, which to all appearance is so absolutely her own, is in truth God's life in her. It is her own life only provisionally, that is, so long as she subserves God's ulterior formative or redemptive purposes in Man. God creates Nature only that He may form Man. He alone gives us natural substance or identity, and spiritual form or individuality; but He gives us the former only in the strictest subserviency to the latter; and consequently hides Himself with exquisite carefulness from natural sight. Because if He should allow us a sensible perception however dim that we were not ourselves absolutely, or by nature alone and irrespectively of Him: any more than the statue is itself absolutely, or by virtue of its material exclusively, and independently of the artist: our self-consciousness would be fundamentally vitiated, and we should remain no whit less lifeless than the statue itself. He takes exquisite care therefore to guard us against this fatality. He gives us life or selfhood in an inward concealed way altogether, that is, by spiritually vivifying Na-

ture, or transfiguring it into History; so that our consciousness in becoming subject to the limitations of space and the relations of time, stamps us to our own experience as inevitably finite and relative existences, and hence forever discriminates us from Him. Thus as I said God creates or gives being to Nature, but only that He may thereby make, or spiritually form, us. For we seeing nothing and suspecting nothing of the latent Divine presence in nature, suppose her maternity to be final or absolute, and hence unhesitatingly appropriate the life with which she is aglow to ourselves, to the extent of becoming spiritually bound up and identified with all its issues.

Now as this life is in itself really Divine, that is to say, infinite as having no relation to space, and absolute as having no relation to time, we, in thus appropriating it as we do without the least misgiving to our most undivine — *i. e.* finite and relative — selves, of necessity break it up, belittle, and degrade it to the minutest dimensions of egotism and lust. This necessity will at once become intelligible to the reader, if he imagine the sculptor as primarily creating — *i. e.* animating by his own genius — the clay out of which the statue is subsequently to be shaped. It is obvious that the statue in that case would be no longer lifeless but living, being animated or invested with personality on the mother's side as well as the father's. If the sculptor himself inwardly quickened or gave spiritual substance to the marble, as God quick-

ens or gives spiritual substance to Nature, the marble like Nature would instinctively yearn to his desire, would spontaneously bring forth whatsoever he exacted of it; and the offspring consequently would palpitate with all the mother's life. Like ourselves indeed it would be alive or conscious *only* on the maternal side: for however traditionally instructed it might become in the faith of an invisible spiritual paternity, operative within the bowels of its material substance, this would long remain, like our traditional faith in God's creative presence in nature, a mere doctrinal and not an experimental conviction, while the statue would infallibly incline just as we do to accept its own actual consciousness as the measure of the truth, or infer that what it organically grasped of existence was in fact the all of life. Thus its spiritual immaturity or lack of living sympathy with its paternal progenitor — its historic inexperience and ignorance of everything beyond the seeming and palpable — would leave it without any true standard of judgment: would render it in its own private estimation a very perfect creation already, and array it in every presumptuous, arrogant, and if need be, overbearing and hostile attitude towards its fellows.

This is our own moral history in a similitude. The sole philosophic explanation of our universal natural pride truculence and turbulence is, that we take our natural consciousness for granted, regard it as absolute, suppose ourselves to be spiritually or individually vitalized as we issue

from Nature's womb, whereas we are then living a wholly supposititious life, a life upon which we have not the slightest conceivable claim, except in virtue of its prospective spiritual advantage to us. Accordingly whenever our consciousness reports us in any degree superior to the persons about us, there is no end of our spiritual cackling or inward self-complacency over the discovery; or in any degree inferior, there is no end of our inward chagrin and despondency. In short we each of us instinctively appropriate this great and infinite life of God in Nature to ourselves, to our own puny finite selves: but inasmuch as we are yet historically unreconciled to each other: inasmuch as these finite selves of ours have not as yet been infinited — *i. e.* harmonized one with another — by the advent of a true society, fellowship, or equality among men, and are consequently without that field of spontaneous action which only such a society guarantees: so the Divine life thus instinctively appropriated by us, finds no adequate and orderly ultimation in our outward life and action, and hence is constrained to come forth in every perverse infernal form of self-seeking, lust, and murder.

But what of all this a thousand times over? It is a strict constitutional or subjective experience, and has no more logical relevancy to our perfected individuality, to our objective spiritual creation, than the rude unseemly heaps of bricks and mortar, which bestrew the site of a palace, have to the future accomplished edifice. Evil belongs to our purely natural or embryonic con-

sciousness, bearing precisely the same relation to the spiritual perfectness we acquire in the Lord, that the uncouth unhandsome lineaments of the fœtus bear to the full-grown man. For as we saw just now, although the statue being animated to its own consciousness only by its visible mother, and incapable as yet of spiritually reflecting or reproducing the genius of its father, might be a very conceited and foolish statue, a very imperfect and contemptible one as primarily begotten and born, it would yet be a conscious one, instinct with a life or personality of its own, and capable therefore of being moulded by the paternal spirit, which all the while vivifies its maternal substance, into any grace of form and demeanor which that spirit itself originally is. Of course the sculptor — had he really this power previously to impregnate the marble by his genius — would be bound to acquiesce in its essential characteristics as marble, and demand an offspring only so far approximate to himself originally, as those respectable characteristics permitted. Nothing could be more puerile on his part than to blame the statue for any possible imperfection or limitation attaching to it on its merely constitutional side. For the very task of his genius is so to vivify the obedient marble with ideal grace, as that the statue may finally get complete extrication, or imperfect substance become taken up and glorified into perfect form.

The child however offers us a better, because ready-made, illustration of the point in hand.

The child derives body from the mother exclusively, and quickening soul from the father. Yet no father is silly enough to be angry that his child is born spiritually feeble, individually infirm, insufficient to himself indeed beyond all other natural forms. Why? Because he sees in the child's constitutional feebleness but an image or emblem of the spiritual destitution which the universal mind of man is under towards God by nature, or before culture has set in; the visible mother in any case being but the mute unconscious symbol of a far grander invisible maternity: being but a special handmaid or deputy whom great Nature honors for the nonce with her own indefeasible function and attributes. As the universal mother herself at first brings forth fruit to God, spiritual fruit, not spontaneously but by Divine constraint, the constraint of priest and king, so necessarily the specific or representative mother being under law to her husband and subject to his will, brings forth natural fruit with infinite labor and sorrow. She is as passive to her own inherited limitations — as passive to the capacity of the common mother — as her child is passive to her.[1]

To the reader who duly weighs the foregoing considerations, nothing will seem more fallacious than the tendency of religion, on the one hand, to exalt our natural identity to practical infinitude, by making us spiritually chargeable before God with all the good and evil which inhere in our physical temperament; and of science, on the

[1] See Appendix, note J.

other, to give absoluteness to our natural individuality, in making us morally chargeable before society with all the good and evil which flow from our action. They might with equal propriety defame the statue itself for the imperfections inherent in its material; or place a laurel crown upon its head for the skill which the sculptor has exhibited in putting those imperfections out of sight. Of course the statue is ideally perfect — *i. e.* perfect as a work of Art — only in so far as it marries *opus et materies*, form and substance, sculptor and marble, in its own indistinguishable unity; just as we are spiritually perfect — *i. e.* perfect as a Divine creation — and attain to the stature of finished manhood, only in so far as we reconcile father and mother, God and Nature, spirit and flesh, infinite and finite in the bosom of our æsthetic individuality, of our spontaneous life and action. But this is a very different thing from saying that we are literally full of personal merit and personal demerit towards our respective sources. It is one thing, and a perfectly righteous thing, to say that the statue is individually perfect or imperfect as measured by its own ideal, and that we are individually perfect or imperfect as measured against our Divine destiny. But it is quite another, and a perfectly unrighteous, thing, to say that either of us has the slightest possible relation, either of individual merit or of individual demerit, with respect either to the formative substance out of which, or

the creative power by which, we are severally begotten and brought forth.

We are in no danger of ever enacting this judgment with regard to the statue. Why? For the obvious reason that the statue is a strictly formal and in no wise substantial effigy of its maker's genius. It is a purely ideal or imaginative and therefore lifeless form. It lacks natural or constitutional identity with other existence, and hence is destitute alike of subjective consciousness and objective reality. But we habitually enact the judgment with respect to ourselves. Why? Simply because we have precisely what the statue lacks, natural selfhood or identity, and are therefore capable of appropriating to ourselves a good and a truth which are really Divine, but which we could never dream of ascribing to the statue. Thus the difference between us is not in any conceivable inequality of dependence we are severally under to the powers which create us — for no such inequality exists — but solely in the hopeless inequality of those creative powers themselves. The love which is operative in our creation is infinite: that is to say, it is so unhindered by any regard to self, as to make itself unstintedly over to us, and hence leave us no rest until we have become both collectively and individually endued with all its perfection; or until we have become infinited in our turn, by becoming consciously one each with all and all with each. The love which fashions the statue on the other hand is a finite love, the love of realizing and enjoying

its own existence and potency, and is so little creative therefore or capable of communicating even its own meagre inspiration to the work of its hands, as to leave it relatively dead. In short we by virtue of the greatness of our creative source possess NATURAL selfhood or freedom, which is a consciousness of life in ourselves, and hence by instinctively appropriating a good which is infinite, and a truth which is absolute, we become at last Divinely empowered to reproduce them, and make them legitimately our own, in all the breadth of our associated life, and all the fruits of our spontaneous action.

CHAPTER XXVI.

I HAVE now finished — most imperfectly I admit — the task I set myself, which was to illustrate the Physics of Creation, by showing how practically paramount in the Divine regard the interests of our natural identity or community must always be, to those of our spiritual individuality and difference. I have shown that if the creator have power, first of all, to give us such valid projection from Himself as is equivalent to our experience of a perfectly veracious consciousness or selfhood — which he does by suffering us to know and appropriate all the good and evil wrapped up in our finite nature — He can have no difficulty in subsequently moulding that consciousness to whatsoever spiritual issues He will. If we feel ourselves so identified with our natural constitution, with our natural organization of sensibility and intelligence, as freely to assume all the good and evil which inhere in its exercise, then the Divine Providence will obviously enjoy, so far as our consciousness is concerned, a clear field of administration toward us, and may discipline us to what heights of rational and spiritual culture He sees good. But manifestly without this natural basis He can achieve no manner of

rational nearness to us; will be incapable of any sort of intercourse with us; since we should in that case remain not only under that hopeless destitution of real or objective being to which our very nature condemns us, but void also of the phenomenal or subjective existence to which He, in the infinitude of His power, makes even this natural destitution ministerial. I have amply shown in short that the natural existence of the creature is rigidly indispensable to base his spiritual evolution: to confer upon him that preliminary basis of identity or fixity, without which his private individuality — his spiritual being or character — would be wholly impossible and even inconceivable: so that God's creative presence and formative or redemptive operation IN HUMAN NATURE ITSELF — and not as we have foolishly supposed in the isolated individual bosom alone — avouch themselves the inexorably fundamental postulate henceforth of a true Philosophy.

I might indeed stop short here, because I have already answered as I went along, either directly or by implication, every question my reader will probably feel prompted to put to me. But I wish to add a word more by way of summing up.

The spiritual import of the gospel is that God creates us every moment naturally no less than spiritually; that He gives us spiritual form indeed only by giving us natural substance. This as we have seen is precisely what is meant by creation, philosophically defined, namely the giv-

ing natural substance (identity) to spiritual form (individuality). Of course the creator is not supposed to create Himself in any case, but another than Himself. And no possible basis of identity can exist for this other — no conceivable ground of consciousness separating him from his creator, can be argued for him — unless it be supplied by this very destitution of being which is intrinsic, or as we say, natural to him. The fact of his creation implies that he be in himself or naturally the exact opposite of what he is in God or by creation, namely: full of destitution: so that unless God's spiritual creation be organized to the creature's experience on this preliminary basis of natural destitution, he will never know anything about it, will never come to spiritual consciousness, but must remain forever inanimate, non-existent, dead. Hence I say that creation means the giving natural substance to spiritual form: since the nature of the creature, which alone identifies him or affords him conscious subjectivity, is the only thing which spiritually disjoins him with God.

In order to leave no obscurity upon my meaning, let me here say what I mean by the nature of the creature; for clearly God can have no contact with human nature outside of the human consciousness. By the created nature, then, I mean whatsoever all creatures possess in common: thus whatsoever distinguishes them from their creator. Nature is thus a purely spiritual quantity, expressive of a certain community which to our perception characterizes all exist-

ence, or gives it identity in spite of its individual diversities. It signifies no visible tangible conceivable thing, but only a certain spiritual bond, a certain rational order, which I perceive investing all visible tangible things equally or in common. We never see Nature, nor smell it, nor taste it, nor touch it, nor hear it. We see and hear and smell and taste and touch the specific things of nature; that is, the various individual forms which this common bond confounds or identifies. We see the tree or the horse, we breathe the air, we smell the rose, we handle the rock, we drink the water, which are all specific natural forms: but the great spiritual personality of Nature herself we recognize only in thought. In short our conception of nature *in se* or as a personality and apart from her specific forms, is a purely intellectual conception.

Accordingly when I say that God vivifies the nature of His creature, in order to give the creature that sufficing identity which may serve to base his subsequent unlimited spiritual expansion, I do not of course picture nature to my imagination as an actual entity existing somewhere in itself and apart from the experience of its subjects, which God visits and manipulates. No such thing. I merely mean to say that He quickens the common mind of the race, or invests it with His own perfection, in such a manner as to overcome all its inherent weaknesses, and render it an indestructible foundation for any measure of spiritual expansion

on the part of its individual subjects. In other words I mean that He runs our natural community or identity up from its broadest and most diffuse beginnings, into the acutest and most exquisite conceivable individual form: so that we shall eventually see this brute and abject Nature transparent with human substance, glorified into the unity of a living Man.

The reader now sees plainly enough that when I speak of the nature of the creature, I have no idea of nature as a material quantity realizable under the conditions of time and space, but exclusively as a spiritual quantity realizable only under the conditions of consciousness. And consequently he will not suppose me referring — when I speak of God's vivifying our nature — to any imaginary outside or physical operation of God on us, but exclusively to His spiritual operation within the limits of our own phenomenal consciousness. He is of a love so infinite, *i. e.* so void of self-love, that even in bestowing His own eternal blessedness upon the creature, He does so in no arbitrary overpowering way, but in a way of the tenderest and most exquisite conciliation to the creature's own grossest necessities, to his own most abject limitations. He does not forcibly drag the reluctant and struggling creature by the hair of his head up to His own impracticable altitudes, as almost any of our astonishing doctors of divinity would be sure to do; but on the contrary immerses Himself unshrinkingly in the creature's own atmosphere; diminishes Himself with unfaltering

constancy to the creature's own level; condescends with loving and patient perseverance to every most ungodly trait, to every most infirm tendency, of the creature's own consciousness, in order there to construct Himself an anchorage in the creature's regard which no winds will ever jeopardize, which no floods will ever efface. In short His love is so unlike ours, as to let whatsoever is intrinsically most opposite and repugnant to its own quality, come to the surface, come to the amplest self-consciousness, only that that familiar consciousness may itself finally turn out the all-sufficient witness of the creative mercy, and the all-sufficient pledge of the creature's invincible fidelity.

This is that great creative operation spiritually wrought by God in our nature, which Christianity reveals, and which all subsequent history has been forcing upon our comprehension: consisting first, in His permitting us, as a community acknowledging His name, to feel and exhibit all that common want or destitution which belongs to us as natural subjects, and which is merely *organized* in our appetites and passions, and bring forth whatever overpowering cupidity and ferocity of manners are bred of such want: and then secondly in His making us to see so keenly all the horror and hideousness of this state of things, as of ourselves or spiritually to avert ourselves from it, and eventually disown and disuse every method and institution of our associated life which nourish and perpetuate it. The love which vivifies our common nature, or

gives us being, is really infinite: and as we each of us with every breath we draw appropriate this infinitude to ourselves, feeling it to be very bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, we necessarily put on for a time the lineaments of the devil, and expand to all the dimensions of conceit, tyranny, and lust. By my very nature as a derivative being — as having really no life in myself, while yet I feel myself full of life — I am irresistibly prone to all manner of self-illusion; instinctively exalting myself out of all rational measure, and claiming a dominion wholly disproportionate to my force. Now the Divine Love permits, as Revelation teaches us, all this natural arrogance obduracy and imbecility on our part, in the interest exclusively of our immortal spiritual advantage. According to Revelation, which affirms Christ's glorification down to his flesh and bones (*i. e.* the consummate marriage of the Divine and human natures) the Divine Love is so literally infinite in its resources, as to make no account of our latent and unconscious selfishness, but on the contrary allows it every conceivable latitude and longitude of manifestation, in order that His own true power in endowing us with spiritual manhood may thus procure itself free play. In a word the Divine Love is of that essentially formative or redemptive quality, that it permits its creature to effloresce to the fullest possibilities of his natural finiteness and corruption, in order that the interests of his conscious identity being thus put upon an indestructible basis, he may at last become endowed

by his maker with a spiritual individuality worthy of Him whose glory it is eternally to subjugate evil to good, dark to light, death to life.

I do not hesitate to say that it is this, and this alone, which makes the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ worthy of its name, namely: that it shows the total mystery of creation to lie in a formative or redemptive work Divinely wrought within the very nature of the creature. It makes all God's creative ability to turn upon His unstintedly glorifying the literal flesh and bones of His creature; or, what is the same thing, animating our lowest propensities with His own spiritual substance. Nothing short of this appeases the mighty hunger of the heart towards God. It is much no doubt when one is prone to evil, to be forcibly withheld from it, as Swedenborg alleges the angels are, by an incessant exertion of Divine power. But how tedious it would be to believe that the Divine power was always to be thus tasked in behalf of such reptiles as we are! How gladly would one forego one's inmost scoundrelism, to release the Divine love from any further strain and tension in his behalf! How irresistible in other words is the aspiration of the soul, when once it has caught the flavor of the Divine name, to become like Him, to become self-prompted, self-sustained, and self-guaranteed, in all goodness and truth! Now the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the fullest Divine justification, the frankest Divine authentication, of this aspiration on our part, inasmuch as it shows all God's love and wisdom and power

engaged in gratifying it. It proves the Divine infinitude to be so real a quantity, the Divine love to be so absolute an energy, as to glorify the very nature of the creature, by converting its intrinsic evil into otherwise unimaginable good, its abounding death into otherwise inconceivable life: so vacating or superseding that inveterate oppugnancy to itself which inheres in the finite constitution, and turning it into the eternal argument and illustration of its own matchless truth. Creation would indeed be wholly inadmissible to a philosophic regard, on any lower terms than those prescribed by the gospel. For the very nature of the creature, as a finite or dependent being, must eternally disqualify him for the Divine fellowship, unless God's own resources enable Him spiritually to overcome the disqualification. Hence the enormous aid Revelation brings to Philosophy, in that it places the entire stress of the creative operation in overcoming a certain obstacle which the finite nature itself offers to the Divine inhabitation; an obstacle so genuine and inveterate as to succumb to nothing short of the actual Divine vivification of the nature, and its consequent unimpeded elevation to the utmost heights of spiritual form and order.

Such is the profound philosophic truth which underlies the Christian doctrine of the Atonement, or reconciliation of the Divine and human natures in the Christ. The infinite God himself is henceforth the open secret of our conscious existence as well as of our unconscious being. The dogma of

Christ's divinity, of his glorification down to his literal flesh and bones, implies, when interiorly viewed, that infinite Love and Wisdom create us every moment physically as well as psychically; afford us every moment natural or conscious identity, as well as spiritual or unconscious individuality: so that our very bodies, being instinct with the same Life which quickens our souls, should challenge an equal sanctity with them.[1] "Creation," says Swedenborg, "signifies what is Divine from inmosts to outmosts, or from primaries to ultimates. For whatsoever derives from God, begins from Himself and proceeds according to order to its last form, thus through the heavens into the world, and there rests as in its own end, for the ultimate term of Divine order is in mundane nature. Such is the meaning of creation."[2] We to be sure have not the faintest suspicion of God's intimate presence and operation in our consciousness, because we have no recognition of His creative activity in Nature; but on the contrary habitually hold nature to be so indisputably absolute, as to conceive a just doubt sometimes whether God so much as created it "once on a time." In very juvenile states of mind indeed we often argue ingeniously even against the Divine existence. *Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour!*

[1] A superior sanctity even, if need be. For, as Swedenborg remarks, when commenting upon the ephod or outer garment of the Jewish high priest, "the outmost or ultimate, when order is perfect, is holy above interior things, because the holiness of interior things is there complete." See Arc. Cel., 9824.

[2] Arc. Cel., 10634.

Of course the reason why creation always eludes a scientific induction is, that it is primarily a process of matriculation, and the mother is naturally nearer and dearer to the child's heart than the father. Everything which exists or is formed presupposes both a visible material substance out of which — and an invisible spiritual force by which — it exists or is formed, and of which it is the unity. The former element incorporates it, gives it body, so identifying it with all other things; the latter animates it, gives it soul, so individualizing it from all other things. In other words the making of things, the giving them conscious life or form, involves of necessity a double movement: one dynamical, active, and paternal, which fecundates the thing, gives it spiritual being or soul; the other statical, passive, and maternal, which fixes the thing, gives it material existence or body, and so promotes or serves the higher spiritual process.

Now what I say is that consciousness always identifies its subject with the mother-element in this transaction, and separates him from the father. I have not the slightest consciousness of myself save upon my natural side, so that unless the relation between God and Nature which issues in my creation, turn out a strictly conjugal one, in which the wife becomes endowed with all the wealth of the husband, or incorporate with His substance, I shall remain forever ignorant, except from hearsay possibly, of my paternal source. I know myself, or am conscious, only as a natural subject. I may have

heard very much about the Divine existence apart from Nature, and been taught to infer that I shall sooner or later come into direct relation with such existence. But the information is superstitious, and the expectation idle. I shall never really know God, save in so far as He is interpreted in my proper self-knowledge; save in so far as He is revealed in the familiar lineaments of my own nature; save in so far as He is reproduced in every feature of my own subjectivity. The child knows his mother without anybody's help, or instinctively; since the incessant contact he has with her leaves no obscurity upon that point. But he knows his father only upon his mother's testimony. He refuses to acknowledge any one as lawful father, whom she does not first acknowledge as sole husband. This complete dependence of the father upon the mother in prolification, is what gives marriage its legal sanctity, and makes conjugal infidelity so much greater a reproach to the woman than the man. People often complain of the legal subordination of the wife to the husband in marriage; and rightfully too. For it has nothing to excuse it but the typical virtue of the institution, which implies the mystical union of the Divine and human natures in all true creation; or imports that the lower nature becomes so intimately and inseparably fused with the higher one, in the social regeneration of the race, as that IMMANUEL —*God with us*— must eventually confess itself the sole authentic and living Word of the New Dispensation.

The law of our civic morality which suspends the legitimacy of the child upon the father alone, thus implying the civic inferiority of the mother, seems, like a thousand other things in our traditional ethics, a wholly arbitrary arrangement. For one would naturally say that the visible mother afforded a far readier and less dubious ground of affiliation for the child than the invisible father. The custom however is to honor the less obvious paternal element, and nothing reconciles the mind to it, or redeems it from glaring caprice, but the fact that all our historic experience of every sort — great as it appears in itself — is yet vastly greater and more interesting in its typical character; that is to say when viewed as representing a profounder and more permanent because Divine order of life for man upon earth. The honor we traditionally pay to paternity over maternity is not an arbitrary thing. It grows out of the absolute necessity all human legislation has been under to reflect and promote the great truth of human destiny, which is the Divine Incarnation, or the eventual unimpeded manifestation of the infinite Divine perfection in all the forms of human nature, especially its basest forms. During the infancy of the race as of the individual of course, the law of the mother prevails over that of the father, so that at last the mind would infallibly succumb to this strong bias and sink down in abject Naturalism, were it not that the Divine Providence so guides and overrules human legislation, as gradually to mould the very mind itself of the race upon this

great interior truth of its altogether Divine and infinite paternity, and its merely finite and comparatively unimportant maternity. This providential shaping of the common mind of the race shows itself very strikingly in this customary rule of affiliation. For while we have individually had no conception of the actual truth of the case, but on the contrary have supposed our being to be wholly natural and finite, the Divine Love has been all the while silently defeating the fallacy, by fashioning our entire historic consciousness upon the mould of the opposite verity: that is to say, by making the common or associate mind reflect the rightful primacy of the spiritual or propagative energy in creation, represented by the father, over the material and merely productive energy, represented by the mother.

But the law is universal, being avouched as much in art as in life. The sculptor forms his statue out of the maternal marble, only by enduing the marble with the form of his own genius, investing it with the impress of his own æsthetic personality. The marble finites the statue, or imprisons it in her own unexplored womb. The genius of the sculptor animates the statue, gives it soul or ideal form, merely by *de*-fining it, so to speak, or *in*-finiting it from this maternal envelope. The mother finites the child, or wraps it away from light and life, from sight and consciousness in her own unconscious bowels: the seed of the father releases the child from this imprisonment, by animating it or giving it living soul. The truth which the poet sings, the beauty

which the painter reproduces upon the canvas, the science which the scholar patiently elaborates, lie all hopelessly entombed under any amount of actual obscuration and deformity: the penetrating aroma of the student's or artist's genius pervades their sepulchre, and awakens the mute unconscious inmates to life and form. These illustrations, which might be multiplied to any extent, make it plain that all existence or form both natural and artificial presupposes a most unequal or divided parentage; and then supposes a union so truly conjugal between these discordant parents, as that the maternal element becomes taken up and disappears in the paternal one; or what is material substance becomes ravished — glorified — transfigured into spiritual form.

The fundamental law of all true creation or prolification is marriage, and marriage never takes place between equals, but on the contrary invariably exacts a hierarchical distribution of the parties to it, the wife deriving rank from the husband. If any one should have a contrary notion, as that a relation of equality exists between the natural and spiritual elements in production, let me remind him that the productive process is always primarily a process of elimination or casting out, and only subsequently one of assimilation or building up. *The desire of the wife is to the husband, and he shall rule over her.* The sculptor calls his statue forth out of the marble by a gradual process of elimination or rejection: not by cherishing his material, but by skilfully

and firmly rejecting it. Nothing can be more strikingly disparate and incommensurate in themselves, than a sculptor's genius on the one hand, and a brute block of marble on the other. Yet the statue, which unites in itself these discordant things so perfectly as to obliterate every vestige of the original disproportion, could never be able to do this, unless one of the elements was essentially superior, the other inferior; unless one commanded and the other obeyed; unless one were object and the other subject. The resultant form in all prolification is high or low, perfect or imperfect, energetic or feeble, just as the mother is first the wife; that is to say, just as the maternal or productive element merges and disappears in its paternal or prolific one: as in the statue, for example, the material marble becomes utterly wrought and taken up into ideal form. If the form imposed by the sculptor completely ravish — swallow up — glorify into its own ideal proportions — the material supplied by the marble, so that you can nowhere put your finger and say, "Here substance dominates form, or nature rebels against art:" the work is perfect and challenges immortal approbation. But if the form anywhere allow the substance to peep out, so that you can say, "Here is muscle and there is marble:" if in other words the sculptor's genius has not been able to compel the marble into ideal form so thoroughly, as that you shall never once think of it as rebellious but only as completely subjugated to his skill: then the work is imperfect, and invites to new enterprise. In looking

at a perfect work of Art, you never think of dividing your admiration between the artist and nature: on the contrary you bestow it all upon the artist; because you know that what he gets from nature is never furtherance but always opposition; so that his genius avouches its purity in fact in the exact ratio of its invention or power to overcome difficulties. Art is the glorified or resurgent form of man's activity, because like all resurrection it implies its subject's previous death to a lower form of action: the artist being pronounced artist and not simple craftsman exclusively by his originality, which is his power to unlearn tradition, and undo or supersede all that was ever done before him. In a perfect work of art accordingly the substance is wholly swallowed up of the form: what is spiritual in it completely glorifies or transfigures what is natural and material: so as that out of two things so unequal and discordant *in se* as a sculptor's genius and a brute unconscious block of marble, a third thing is generated so Divinely perfect or at one with itself as to defy analysis, and forbid the wit of all mankind to discern what or how much belongs to the one parent, what or how much to the other.

Precisely so it is with our perfected consciousness, with our spontaneous life, with whatsoever we do from delight or attraction. Infinite and finite are so livingly united, so lovingly wedded and bedded within the periphery of our spontaneity, within all the range of our æsthetic life and action, that it is sheer nonsense to attempt a

logical divorce of them, by saying where one begins and the other leaves off. The true son of God wears a garment *without seam, woven from the top throughout*, and which cannot therefore be rent or divided, one half to God, the other to Nature. You might more easily divide heat from light in the solar ray, by gazing stupidly at the sun. Art announces a marriage so perfect, a union so dazzling, between the Divine and the human natures, between God's fulness and man's want, as utterly to forbid analysis, and put pedantry consequently out of countenance. The child of the marriage is so intensely himself or individualized — both parents are so exquisitely blent and melted in all the length and breadth, in all the height and depth of his characteristic action — that he is indeed absolutely sure, until his spiritual life dawns within him, to lose sight of the modest unostentatious principal, and recognize only the gorgeous overpowering accessory.

In fact our perfected or associate consciousness, our æsthetic life and action: that new and regenerate nature in us which avouches the Providential reconciliation of the twin antagonist elements of our consciousness — church and state, self and the neighbor, interest and duty — in a faultless society or fellowship among men: so completely fuses in the bosom of its own unity God and Nature, infinite and finite, that it is of no practical account to anybody but myself (and this only with reference to my immortal possibilities), which element I emphasize in the transaction; whether the more obvious maternal, or

the less obvious paternal, one; whether the grandly creative element, or the simply constitutive one. So palpably true is all this, that grave apoplectic divines, and light ambitious men of science, have only to follow their various bent, and warmly espouse either the naturalistic or spiritualistic hypothesis, in order to insure them an attentive audience and a very considerable repute with their respective factions, as champions of distressed Truth: though, sooth to say, poor Truth herself, inasmuch as she must be wholly unhurt by any man's or any set of men's contempt, is never likely to be too much flattered by any man's or any set of men's adhesion.

Why have we all been so long befogged as to these spiritual or philosophic contents of Revelation? Why have we been so hopelessly blind to its grand humanitary scope and substance? For no other reason than the church's superstitious, because exclusive, regard for its letter. Our intelligence has become so artificial and wooden, so warped from the pure spirit of the truth, by the long bondage which the church has kept us under to the letter, that I doubt not the heathen are capable of a readier insight into the proper spirituality of the Divine name, than we. Of course we felicitate ourselves over the heathen in possessing the letter of Revelation. But if a man gather a rich harvest of nuts only to store them away in his garret, and never permit one of them to be cracked, wherein is he better off than his neighbor who perchance

has gathered none? More than this: if a man lay by a store of eggs and never permit them to be consumed or hatched, is he not greatly worse off than his destitute neighbor, who has no such perishable property on hand, to menace him with all manner of unsavory consequences, the moment he attempts to put it to any reasonable human use?

The letter of Revelation has doubtless proved inestimably advantageous to our civilization; but the most orderly citizenship is as remote from spontaneous or spiritual manhood, as baked apples are from ripe ones. Compared with heathen nations we are indeed as baked apples to green; but I do not see that apples plucked green from the tree and assiduously cooked, as we have been, are near so likely to ripen in the long run, as those which are still left hanging upon the boughs, exposed to God's unstinted sun and air. We manage to maintain our egregious self-complacency unperturbed by vehemently compassionating the heathen, and sending out missionaries to convert them to our foolish ecclesiastical habits: precisely as if a baked apple should begrudge its fellows their natural ripening, and beg them also to come and sputter their indignant life away under the burning summer of the oven, under the mellowing autumn of the bake-pan. In fact the heathen I suspect find it difficult to regard us yet even as baked fruit. Our ungenerous overbearing and polluting intercourse with them fits them rather to regard us only as very rotten fruit. Whether baked or rotten, however, we are in

either case, so far as our ecclesiastical and political manners are concerned, past the chance of any inward or spiritual ripening. So far as our ecclesiastical conscience is concerned especially, there doesn't seem one drop of honest native unsophisticated juice left in us. If there were, could we be so content year in and year out to see our clergy, heterodox and orthodox, alternately cuff and clout God's sacred word — which is inwardly all alive and leaping with spiritual or universal meaning — as if it were some puny brat of man's begetting, some sickly old-wives' tale, some vapid and senile tradition, destitute even of a fabulous grace and tenderness?

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so

much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.

Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city! for in one hour is thy judgment come!

And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all sweet wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

And cinnamon and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls!

For in one hour so great riches is come to nought! And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off.

All cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate!

Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee;

And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia, Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God:

For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand!

And again they said, Alleluia! And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia!

And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready!

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

And there came unto me one of the seven angels — and talked with me saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the Glory of God.

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

And the gates shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

And they shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations into it.

And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true.

Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things *in the churches*. I am the root and offspring of David; the bright and morning star.

And the spirit and the bride say, come! And let him that heareth say, come! And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. — REVELATION, xviii., xix., xxi., and xxii. chapters in part.

The Lord shall reign forever, even thy God, O Zion! unto all generations. Alleluia! — PSALM cxlvi., 10.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A. PAGE 149.

I HOPE that none of my readers, more attentive to the sound than the sense of words, will suspect me of irreverence towards what is called "the moral law," meaning the law of the Ten Commandments. I certainly mean by "moral manhood" something quite distinct from that most real manhood which stands in our interior conscientious reverence for God's word. This is an exclusively spiritual manhood, because the purpose of the law (as might be argued simply from the negative tenor of its injunctions) being not to nourish pride in the votary but humility, not to confer righteousness but only to give a knowledge of sin, he who in his intercourse with it should find his moral character aggrandized rather than diminished, would manifestly stamp the purpose of the law with folly. I mean by "moral manhood" that purely sensuous and fallacious judgment of ourselves and other men which imports that we are something in ourselves, or absolutely, and irrespective of our relations to our kind. Neither the Ten Commandments, nor any other Divine word, were ever designed to foster this insane pretension. Human pride and ignorance are sure to divide one man from another quite sufficiently: the Ten Commandments (or conscience) were given to us not to inflame this disunion but to obliterate it forever, by teaching those who are

most prone to it, that all men, whatever be their moral or outward differences one from another, are spiritually of one blood in God's sight, being all alike full of inmost theft adultery cruelty and falsehood.

NOTE B. PAGE 202.

THIS is why the Divine love towards us naturally, is eternally active: because it can never be satisfied. It could be satisfied only in thoroughly delivering us from evil: but as such deliverance would involve the destruction of our natural identity or self-consciousness, it necessarily restricts itself to the perpetual delight of subordinating our evil to its own good: so vivifying human history, or making it immortal. The same considerations explain too the reason why so many brutal husbands come to hate the wives who were once dear to them; for having no truer and deeper sympathy with them than this low bond of personal admiration or affection supplies, they no sooner find the persons of their wives legally made over to them in absolute possession, than their affection dies out. People of an interior quality accept the fact, and seek in each other a sacreder communion than they might otherwise perhaps have aspired to, a communion in all gentleness, forbearance, peace, and innocence. But the mass of men chafe under the disappointment, and if they are men of disorderly lives, visit it upon their innocent companions, so exposing themselves to the vengeance of a community which is still too stupid to see, that it is only its own inhumanity which is primarily at fault.

NOTE C. PAGE 205.

MORALITY, which is the demand of a personal righteousness in man, finds its only true fulfilment, as Christ taught, in the social sentiment, the sentiment of human brotherhood. "*Whoso does unto others as he would have others do unto him, fulfils all law and prophecy.*" And clearly no one does this who does not cordially cherish or livingly obey the sentiment of human fellowship, of human equality. The moral history of the race has thus no end beyond the actual evolution of a universal human fellowship, the inauguration of a perfect SOCIETY among men, in which each shall be deemed the exact equal of all the rest, and the entire social force consequently become the guarantee of the widest justice to every individual member. Foolish European popes and potentates think they may dodge this Divine destiny; and even our own miniature editions of these civic and ecclesiastic grandeurs feel that they too are called upon in their feeble duodecimo way to pooh-pooh it. But while He who sitteth in the heavens laughs at the former, and has them in derision, He sees perfectly well that the latter will be most happy to accommodate themselves to the popular *aura* on the subject, whenever wherever and however it shall manifest itself. It constitutes in fact the precise advance which our Church and State have made upon the European model of those institutions, that our priests, being destitute of all power God-ward, are unable to communicate any sacredness to our rulers man-ward. It is true that multitudes of people, having no conception of our approaching social expansion, fancy that we are Providentially destined to a much finer ecclesiastical and political development than has ever been known in Europe. The whole notion is intensely incongruous. We are utterly without a priesthood in the ecclesiastical sense of that institution; utterly without a government in the political sense

of that institution. Ecclesiastically considered the priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins; but there is no such fanatical pretension possible on the part of our plain shame-faced humane ministers. It does not legitimately exist outside of the catholic church, where it exists only as a tradition. Our priests are mere popular orators, having not the slightest authoritative claim upon any man's attention or regard, and depending therefore for their influence solely upon their ability spiritually to interpret the great facts of history and of nature. And a government, in the political sense of that institution, does not exist as here wholly by the will of the governed, but by an alleged Divine right or appointment antedating history, and attested by priestly consecration. Our priests have a much more exalted because more real ministry than their European types, which is that of educating the popular thought, and kindling the popular aspiration. And our rulers have a right indisputably more Divine than is exhibited anywhere else, that of reflecting and carrying out the popular will which has been thus originated. In short we are *prospectively* for the first time in history a true human society or brotherhood, in which every man will be inwardly secure of Heaven's benediction, and outwardly secure of Nature's allegiance, by simple right of manhood alone.

NOTE D. PAGE 209.

We denounce the Romish church as inhuman for enjoining abstinence from marriage upon its "religious" orders; but we enact the same inhumanity in making our converts believe the indulgence of their purely natural appetites and passions to be sinful, save in so far as it is conformed to an arbitrary conventional standard. The only true standard of purity for the sexual relations

is marriage; but then it is marriage inwardly as well as outwardly ratified, or reflecting the unforced reciprocal affection of its subjects. What our laws allow to be marriage is one thing, often a very nasty one; what marriage is in itself, or to the apprehension of men who are somewhat advanced towards self-respect and respect for their kind, is quite another thing. Our laws for example, the laws of every so-called Christian country, permit us to sell our daughters — provided only we employ a clergyman to gild the transaction with sacred words and call it a proper marriage — to any unclean wretch, steeped to the lips in practical atheism, whose pecuniary reputation enables him to buy them. What sort of purity between the sexes does marriage thus interpreted engender? Let our brothels answer. Let the crowd of painted harlots answer, who make our Christian streets hideous every night with their skulking allurements. Let the annual sacrifice which Christendom offers up to the merciless Moloch of its civilization answer: the sacrifice of myriads of innocent uninstructed youth, victims of depraved appetite, of morbid self-indulgence, victims of that fierce incontinency in every form, which our persistent denial of God in Nature, and our insane abandonment of it to the devil, infallibly condemn them to. Let our popular newspapers answer, teeming as they do with the most prurient details of conjugal infidelity; with hints to clandestine commerce; with enigmatic notifications of adulterous meetings; with the advertisements of abortionists, and all the other insignia of a profitable traffic in obscenity. These are the fruits which legitimately inhere in our conventional marriage, and fitly express the ineffectual stink with which it inwardly reeks towards heaven.

But that a truer marriage sentiment than this is being enkindled at this day by God's spirit in the bosom of universal man, is known I hope to the experience of very many who read these lines: the sentiment of a unity so Divine between the sexes as must erelong utterly discharge their

commerce of that fierce libidinousness which has grown out of the past contemptuous suppression of one sex to the mere physical needs of the other, and redeem it to heavenly innocence and tenderness. This higher marriage sentiment is not born of outward want but of inward fulness; for it rigidly presupposes such an advance in human society or brotherhood, as will have lifted every man out of that degrading vassalage to Nature which has hitherto characterized him, and restored him once more to the exclusive allegiance of God and his fellows. The existing legal administration of marriage contemplates the institution not as a means for the highest possible humanization of the parties to it, so much as a sluice for our natural lusts. A man enters into matrimony because he cannot otherwise reputably compass the gratification of his grossest necessities. In this way the marriage sentiment has become so hopelessly degraded to the popular understanding, that there are few persons who do not believe that the institution is destitute of any internal or spiritual bonds, being kept in honor exclusively by the legal sanctions which separate it from harlotry. With such men chastity means the literal observance of law, though the total spirit of it be habitually and foully violated. But all this is simply preposterous. True virtue or manhood is never literal or legal, but always spiritual. It stands in no amount of conformity to established usage, but only in the spirit which dictates such conformity, whether a spirit of freedom or one of self-seeking. There is no such thing as a virtuous or vicious act in itself, and apart from the temper of the actor. Man alone is virtuous or vicious, and his action is one or the other, only as it is colored by his personality. Thus chastity is not an act, it is the spirit from which every action should proceed. There is no such thing as an act of chastity, but only acts of uncleanness. All our acts are alike acts of uncleanness, until they are redeemed by that spirit of chastity which is incessantly vivifying us inwardly from God. The true marriage

sentiment is first spiritual, and carnal only by derivation from that; so that the identical acts which would be unchaste when begotten of another spirit, become now the home of chastity. In truth the sentiment is so inwardly inflamed by God's spotless love: it is in its essence or origin so interior a friendship, so profound a bosom fellowship and correspondence between man and woman, that every form of its existence or outgoing is of necessity chaste. To impose outward restraints upon it: to say to it, thou shalt not do this or that: is simply to ignore its Divine genesis, and misconceive its essential innocence. It is like forbidding defilement to lilies, ostentation to violets, ferocity to doves, or duplicity to sheep. Of its own essential nature the sentiment abhors nothing more than the reciprocal license and profanation which even our best conventional conjugality permits to its subjects; and it has consequently no more assured result than ultimately to recover the now blackened and burnt-up earth of its abode, to the stainless peace and truth and purity of heaven.

It is this new and better marriage sentiment in the popular bosom, which authoritatively claims to itself the purification of the sexual instinct; which bids us henceforward teach our children that that instinct was never given for its own sake, but only as the transitory earth of an enduring heaven; only to base a spiritual character or manhood in them which shall be vital with God's inmost infinitude. It is never right knowledge which corrupts or perverts our action; much more have we to dread that systematic ignorance upon the sacredest topics which is enforced as a prop to our established superstitions. "Well-stated knowledge," says Dr. Wilkinson in his sensible preface to Swedenborg's treatise on the Organs of Generation, "did never yet contribute to human inflammation; and we much question whether the whole silver-spade story with which we put off our children's queries about our whence be not

theoretically fallacious; and whether children should not be told the truth from the first; that before desire and imagination are born, the young mind may receive in its cool innocency the future objects of powers and faculties which are to be subject afterwards to such strong excitements." Especially is this true when we give our children habitually to know that all their natural life is a most strict education for a better one, and that there is accordingly no passion or appetite of their nature which this Divine use does not inmostly sanctify, does not render infinitely holy and sweet. Is that a sort of knowledge to inflame the imagination, or lead to the abuse of nature? That the healthful use of our natural organs would thereby be promoted, is highly probable; and so far am I from dissimulating the probability that I truly rejoice in it. For the only salvation for us as a race — our sole chance of resuscitation to immortal purity and health — is, that coming at last to practise what we now only preach, viz. that *the Most High dwelleth* NOT *in temples made with hands*, we turn from the pompous and illusory shrines whither so many resort for the indulgence of a morbid devotion, for the enjoyment at best of an imaginary holy moment, and consent to recognize God's living altar, the only visible shrine of His holiness, in the hitherto defaced deformed and degraded human body: which being thus for the first time inwardly consecrated and made spontaneously submissive to its Divine ends and uses, will put on sweetness, health, and beauty, with the day, and carry gospel marrow and fatness into every lean and famished place of God's dominion. The use of our natural faculties is far more outraged by their wilful disuse than by their habitual abuse. Disuse utterly disorganizes and destroys the faculty; abuse only enfeebles it. Both are bad; only one is irremediable.

Appetite and passion never exert a controlling and therefore degrading influence, until they have been rendered fierce by some foolish asceticism, some silly vol-

untary humility on our part, or some accidental starvation. Reduce the appetites to a famished condition, imprison them as you do a tiger, allowing them only a stinted measure of nutriment, or so much as they can compass clandestinely, and of course you insure them the tiger's force and ferocity. Thus the unhappy and unhandsome monk, who from some spiritual insanity, some morbid ambition to achieve an extraordinary personal holiness, or a greater nearness to God than common people enjoy, sets himself to deny and starve out the most honorable and benignant of our natural appetites, often finds his interior thought polluted by the most unclean images, and his whole life turned into a sordid conflict with the basest of concupiscences: a conflict from which happily there is no deliverance but in the renunciation of his proud and delusive spiritual aims. But in their ordinary normal aspect, when they are not bedevilled by some unseen ghostly interference, growing out of this ambition of a preternatural personal sanctity, out of some accidental famine, or other coerced deprivation of their liberty, the natural appetites and passions are a solace and refreshment to our spiritual faculties, rather than a burden. Above all things would they be so, if we once admitted them to the sunshine of God's recognition; if, clothed with His smile and restored to their right mind by His cordial benediction, they were permitted henceforth to sit undisturbed at His feet: *i. e.* fulfil unimpeded those external or organic uses upon which the inmost sanity of our hearts and minds is contingent.

Multitudes of thoughtful people are asking themselves the question: How the merely human letter of marriage is going to be brought at last into harmony with its truly Divine spirit; so compelling our romancers and dramatists to find elsewhere the theme of their tragic or comic inspiration. Of course it never can be done except by legislatively freeing the institution of everything that practically tends to make it a byword and hissing.

The institution of paternity once gave the father an absolute property in his child, irrespective of God's prior claims. The relation is still administered indeed in a very faulty way; but the fault lies manifestly in the poverty and imbecility of our existing social methods, and does not attribute itself to the heart of the parent. For time has been gradually modifying the institution into less absolute or more spiritual form, so that it is a rare thing now to see any very gross abuse of paternal power, any very gross constraint of the child's rightful freedom. No sensible man would now maintain the child's obligation to love or serve a parent, who should put himself in habitually unlovely relations to the child, or violate his instinctive self-respect. In a word the sanctity of the child in a social estimation is becoming recognized as quite equal to that of the parent, and the sentiment of paternity consequently is losing much of the ferocity which characterized it, when the father felt his responsibility wholly unshared and unrelieved by society.

Our traditional marriage-customs in like manner endow the husband with a property which is still much too absolute in the person of his wife, and which infallibly conflicts with God's higher claim upon her allegiance. They bind the wife, that is to say, to love and serve the husband without regard to his character; though he should inflict every conceivable outrage upon her indeed, short of technical infidelity. The unquestionable claim of God upon every human heart is, that it shall love Him supremely, and the neighbor subordinately; that it shall first of all acknowledge the infinite or what is of God in the neighbor, and afterwards the finite, or what is of the neighbor himself. Now God's supreme manifestation of Himself, as we have seen or shall see in the text, is in our *individuality*, or characteristic worth: so that character in another is what we are supremely bound to love and cherish. Subordinately to this we may do the amplest justice to the person's temperament,

or natural gifts: to his genius, his intellect, his wit, his piety, his humor, his energy, his manners: and abound in tender pity to his infirmities. But our primary allegiance is due irresistibly to his character, or to the spirit with which his various gifts are exercised. We cannot love a person who is *characteristically* unlovely: that is to say, who does not more or less honestly cultivate a spiritual approximation to the Divine spirit. And we have no business therefore to bind a wife to her husband absolutely, and irrespectively of his character. We can only do this at the risk of her own spiritual degradation, and God almighty will sweep all our civic and religious sanctities into the dust-hole of men's contempt, long before He will consent to the jeopardy of that interest in any one.

What then is the remedy? How shall we reinstate marriage in men's reverence, and rescue it from the purely hypocritical patronage it receives at the hands of our swarming scribes and Pharisees? The answer is very simple, namely: by leaving the institution more in woman's keeping, and less in man's; by making her most answerable for its honor, who is most interested in its stability. I am firmly persuaded that all our existing evils in the conjugal sphere, and all the disorder consequent upon these evils in the sphere of the sexual relations generally, are owing to the fact, that man's influence in the administration of marriage is still unhappily so paramount, and woman's so subordinate. And the only remedy consequently for these evils and disorders, is, that our legislators proceed at once and boldly to equalize the relation of the wife to the husband in the conjugal bond, *by suspending divorce upon the prayer of the wife alone.* Nothing short of this will equalize the relation of the sexes, or enable the woman to evince that incontestable spiritual priority in the realm of sentiment with which God and nature have endowed her, and which has hitherto been kept in wrongful and rigid abeyance to man's material priority. The wife is not

at present the equal of her husband conjugally, because, being by nature less brutal than he, less prone to sensuality, she is vastly more at the mercy of his caprice and infidelity. What is manifestly wanted then is, that the higher or spiritual element in the conjugal relation represented by the wife, be released from its immemorial domination by the lower or material element represented by the husband, and invested with its rightful Divine primacy. If the honor of marriage were thus legislatively confided to woman, as it assuredly must be erelong under penalty of dying out altogether, we should then see for the first time in history, a practical administration of the institution which would not only vindicate the strict divinity of its origin, and the rightful spirituality of its sanctions, but would infallibly conciliate also the unaffected love and homage of all mankind.

NOTE E. Page 236.

I knew a gentleman some years ago of exemplary religiosity and politeness, but of a seasoned inward duplicity, who failed in business as was supposed fraudulently. He was in the habit of meeting one of the largest of his creditors every Sunday on his way to church, where his own voice was always among the most melodious to confess any amount of abstract sins and iniquities; and he never failed to raise his hat from his head as he passed, and testify by every demonstrative flourish how much he would still do for the bare forms of friendship, when its life or substance was fled. The creditor was long impatient, but at last grew frantic under this remorseless courtesy, and stopping his debtor one day told him that he would cheerfully abandon to him the ten thousand dollars he had robbed him of, provided he would forego the exhibition of so much

nauseous politeness. Sir, replied the imperturbable scamp, I would not forego the expression of my duty to you when we meet, for twice ten thousand dollars! This is very much our case religiously. Whereas if we would only give over our eternal grimacing and posturing, only leave off our affable but odious ducking and bowing to our great creditor, long enough to see the real truth of the case, and frankly acknowledge bankruptcy utter and fraudulent, nothing could be so hopeful. The supreme powers are infinitely above reckoning with us for our shortcomings, if we would only have the manliness to confess spiritual insolvency, and not seek any longer to hide it from their eyes and our own, under these transparent monkey-shines of a mock devotion; under this perpetual promise to pay which never comes to maturity, but gets renewed from Sunday to Sunday *in secula seculorum.* God does not need our labored civility, and must long ere this have sickened of our vapid doffing of the hat to him as we pass. He seeks our solid advantage, not our ridiculous patronage. He desires our living not our professional humility; and He desires it only for our sakes not His own. He would fashion us into the similitude of His perfect love, only that we might enjoy the unspeakable delights of His sympathetic fellowship. If He once saw us to be thus spontaneously disposed towards Him, thus genuinely qualified for the immortal participation of His power and blessedness, He would I am sure be more than content never to get a genuflexion from us again while the world lasted, nor hear another of our dreary litanies while sheep bleat and calves bellow.

NOTE F. PAGE 240.

SWEDENBORG describes "the world of spirits" (as he calls it, which intervenes between "the spiritual world" proper and the natural world) as being the seat and source of all our moral power. Thence descend all those tiny streams of influence which have hitherto fertilized the moral world. The pope of Rome on earth is a lifeless puppet compared with the inflated substance which fills and rules the Rome of the world of spirits; and the Russian czar and the German emperors and the British kings, and the European despots universally, together with the bustling "little corporal" who stung them all to madness, are only so many futile wire-pulled manikins beside the grim originals of that remorseless inner sphere. Thus, when we die, we wake without any shock or lapse of consciousness in a world perfectly conformed to our ideal. If — believing that God does really commit His honor to another — we have been wont to swear by some renowned Stagirite, by some infallible apostle Paul, by some ponderous Kant, or authoritative Swedenborg, we shall find in that world plenty of pretenders to that sanctified repute, and be dragged through gutters enow before we learn a needful self-respect. If we wilfully conceive that human life thrives best under despotism civil and religious, we shall have a chance of realizing both of these advantages to our heart's desire. If we persuade ourselves that heaven consists in going to Paris and draining the cup of pleasure to the dregs, we find there a Paris perfectly accommodated to our will, and bring up finally in hospitals whose surgery leaves nothing in the way of skill to be desiderated. If we have convinced ourselves, as some of our divines and politicians labor to do, that slavery is a Divinely ordained condition for men of a darker hue outwardly than we are, and full therefore of an interior blessedness to all who religiously undergo it, we

shall have the amplest opportunities of essaying that Divine blessedness also; for white becomes black and black white in that world without the slightest observation.

Spiritually to be a white man means to be clad with innocence and peace; means to be incapable of serving oneself at another's expense: as spiritually to be a black man means to be armed with violence and deceit, and ever ready to seek our own will by coercing or seducing that of others. Thus there are myriads of men naturally white who are spiritually as black as soot, and who will rise up after death in that world where soul creates body, with hair as crisp, lips as thick, and noses as flat, as any Cuffee of our southern rice-fields: and what is very wonderful, these conceited, because self-made, "niggers" will never doubt that their ebony is your only veritable mother-of-pearl. Ah! that mediatorial or purgatorial world! what miracles it will noiselessly work! what crookednesses it will straighten! what inequalities it will rectify! Swedenborg saw many persons there who had been very majestic characters indeed on earth, renowned for all sorts of conventional sanctity and ability, and who yet had cultivated so little their instincts of human brotherhood here, as spiritually to exhibit no evidence of corporeity beyond a slight mass of hair and a few glittering teeth! Let my reader and me beware of following any multitude whatever to do evil, although that multitude should occupy all the pulpits and all the forums in the land, and have power even to put us in the White House at Washington. For after all the White House is worth only a four years' shelter to any one, and has already become, according to the best statistics, so befouled by unworthy occupation, as to be an altogether dubious forecourt of those mansions, undefiled and incorruptible, which are alone worth our reasonable aspiration.

NOTE G. PAGE 346.

HERE let me take occasion to remind any reader whose literary prejudices may be shocked by my want of reverence for accredited names, that we can in no way so poignantly affront the great light of Truth which enlightens every man that comes into the world, as by practically allowing every renowned Tom Dick and Harry a patent-right as it were to its rays. There can be no monopoly of wisdom where each of us is at best but a learner or receiver, never a teacher or giver: and surely no *á priori* obligation can be shown why any specific person should be with respect to any other specific person either right or wrong. There are no papacies in the realm of knowledge but only in that of established ignorance and superstition; and it is high time for men of discernment to be ashamed of that servile ducking to success, which is fast turning the literary arena into a nauseous Flunkeydom. Truth confers upon her followers the only legitimate dignity they possess, and was never known to accept a tittle from them. It is moreover extremely puerile to need reminding that however it may fare in mundane pursuits, it is yet never true in spiritual things that the race is to the swift, or the battle to the strong. Human prudence is a synonyme of Divine Providence only to low minds, only to men whose ends are so purely selfish as to necessitate the most niggardly conceptions possible of the Divine administration. That literary men should lend themselves to reflect such living oracles as these, and complacently repeat that "to fear God and keep your powder dry" are recommendations of equal value, only proves that literary men have renounced the spiritual traditions of the race, and have swung round to the old Pagan conception of Deity as a respecter of persons. Literature in fact (and this is the tendency of all the merely Fine Arts) has sunk from a power into a flat-

terer of power, from a substance into a shadow, from a life into a memory; feeding so contentedly upon the garbage of personalities and growing so gross upon the diet, that one would say her true vocation had always been mere maid-of-all-work to the booksellers.

NOTE H. PAGE 457.

THE strict relation of maternity which science bears to our intellectual personality, is strikingly exhibited in that giddiness or qualmishness which seizes the mind, when it has begun to be spiritually quickened, in view of the warring tumultuous sea of facts which science endeavors to reduce to order. Sea-sickness is but a type of the loathing and dejection which beset the philosophic stomach, when set adrift upon this restless heaving ocean of knowledge, with no more commanding foothold of doctrine, than is supplied by what men call "the laws of nature." These so-called laws of nature, far from inhering in nature, exert a controlling power over her, and hence can only be conceived of as reflected from some higher source, which is the mind of man. Mere men of science themselves, like Comte, are beginning to reverberate this philosophic instinct. They too declare that these so-called "laws of nature" are not any substantive forces or entities discoverable in nature, but only certain convenient harbors or anchorages which the mind itself constructs against the dreary and disgusting diffuseness of natural fact.

But in truth what we call "the laws of nature" are the mind itself in its most general or bodily form, *i. e.* its least individual and spiritual form. For the mind has a generic unity as well as a specific one; a common form as well as a particular one; a public evolution as

well as a private one; a natural existence as well as a spiritual one: and this common or public form must be wrought out to its full measure of expansion, before the individual or private form can perfectly realize itself, or becomes adequately empowered for its own spiritual functions. The various sciences, each aiming in its own sphere to express or bring out the spiritual unity which underlies all natural variety, are only so many partial embodiments of this great mental corporeity of the race, which will be completely illustrated only by the great mother-science which litters all the special sciences, namely: the science of human society or brotherhood. Any attempt accordingly to explicate Nature by what we call "the laws of nature" is sheerly preposterous. It in fact suspends such explication upon a previous knowledge of the laws of the human mind: *i. e.* postpones its only accurate issue to the advent of a true philosophy of history, which alone exhibits the perfect structure of the mind. To investigate Nature by her own light consequently, or without some previous and commanding doctrine of Man connecting her with God, is like putting to sea without a compass. Every such inconsiderate adventurer is tossed mountain-high on the waves of uncertainty; his frail bark is driven hither and thither by all the fierce winds of contending doctrine; dark clouds of controversy incessantly obscure the pole-star of truth to his eye; and the distracted wanderer soon learns that without supernatural help and guidance, he will never again touch the friendly shore, nor clasp wife and children to his bosom more.

NOTE I. PAGE 470.

THE notion here denounced is the latent inspiration of much of our modern theologic speculation. In Dr. Bushnell's popular book on Nature and the Supernatural, which stands in the same relation to our ordinary characteristic theology that an ox fed on oil-cake does to average beef, it vomits forth jets of lurid flame menacing desolation to every green thing left in the land. How impossible to read Dr. B.'s book, where this diabolic fantasy of a moral righteousness is seen shaping the universe according to its own lust, and where accordingly not only man but God himself is pictured endlessly straining himself out of all Divine peace and innocence in order to achieve some still unachieved moral distinction, without a menace of universal *tetanus* creeping over one vividly distressing to contemplate! Who can imagine one of these high-strung, ravenous, sinewy aspirants after personal perfection, whom Dr. Bushnell delights to paint as God's true children, because he supposes God himself to be mainly intent on that sort of perfection, without getting a very near presentiment of the devil? To think of a set of high-stepping, ring-boned, spavined, self-righteous wretches like these ever becoming "as little children!" It would be easier it seems to me for a whole caravan of camels to go through a needle's eye.

According to Swedenborg the Last Judgment of God in nature is specifically intended to brush away these moralistic cobwebs from the mind, and save unwary flies from getting spiritually entangled. The last judgment, he says, which took place in the world of spirits about a century since, and which abundantly explains the enormous strides the world has been making since in the way of freedom and the consequent development of industry, "was executed only upon those who were externally moral, but internally not spiritual. It was not

executed upon those in heaven or those in hell; but only upon those who were in the middle between heaven and hell, and had there made to themselves factitious heavens."[1] These are the goats mentioned in Matthew 25, who say Lord, Lord, but do nothing of what the Lord spiritually enjoins. *They do their works to be seen of men. They say and do not. They shut the kingdom of heaven against others, but do not go in themselves. They make clean the outside of the cup and platter*, etc, etc. This is the Babylon of Isaiah and the Apocalypse which is cast down into hell, and made a hereditary possession of the bittern.

The reason why people of this order were preserved and tolerated unto the day of the last judgment, is because they who imitate spiritual life in externals or make it visible in a moral life, impress the vulgar favorably, and so lead numbers of the simple to a life of good, while they themselves are inwardly ravening wolves: for the simple in heart look no further than the external or what meets the eyes. Hence all such people were tolerated in the world of spirits from the commencement of the Christian church until the Last Judgment. These are understood in the Apocalypse by those who are not of the first resurrection. They lived in the world in external not in internal sanctity. They were just and sincere for the sake of civil and moral laws, but not for the sake of Divine laws. They filled various offices and did uses but not for the sake of uses. These and all throughout the world like them constituted the first heaven. It was such a heaven as the world and church upon earth is, among those who do good not for good's sake, but from fear of the laws, and the loss of reputation honor and wealth. Men of this sort, whose external sanctity, whose prating [*sermonicatio*] about Divine things, and whose sincerities, for their own sake and that of the world, give them an air of spirituality which imposes on the mass, rush into

[1] Doctrine of Faith, 64.

every kind of abomination when external restraints are loosed. So long as there were congregations of such spirits between heaven and the world, or between the Lord and the church, man was unable to be enlightened; for all illumination comes to man from the Lord by an inward way, and these morbid accumulations in the world of spirits cut off the Divine influx as the beams of the sun are cut off by a black interposing cloud. And since accordingly all these interposing spiritual clouds have been dissipated by that Divine operation in the world of spirits or the interiors of the mind which is called the Last Judgment, the communication between heaven and the world, or the Lord and the church, has been restored. To outward appearance the state of the world may remain unchanged; divided churches may continue to exist. But henceforth the man of the church will be in a more free state of thinking on matters of faith, or spiritual things which relate to heaven, because *spiritual liberty has been restored to him.* FOR ALL THINGS IN THE HEAVENS AND HELLS ARE NOW REDUCED INTO ORDER; and everything harmonic with or opposite to Divine ideas inflowed only from those spheres. The angels have slender hope of the men of the Christian church welcoming this restored liberty, but much of some nation far removed from the Christian world [about 3000 miles, shall we say?], which nation is such that it is capable of receiving spiritual light, and of being made a celestial spiritual man; and they said that at this day interior Divine Truths are revealed in that nation, and received in life and heart, and that it worships the Lord (livingly of course). See the *Treatise on the Last Judgment*, 59–74; and *Continuation*, 10–16.

I am sincere in the opinion that Swedenborg's angels may have squinted towards this side of the Atlantic when they expressed their hope in reference to the new or living church. We were then territorially far remote from Christendom, which properly compre-

hends only the seat of the Roman empire, and were already beginning to experience in a very decided manner that interior or spiritual remoteness, that new-born social force in humanity, which erelong resulted in our complete political and ecclesiastical enfranchisement from Europe. Of course when the angels talk of remoteness they have no idea of distance in space and time, but only of difference in affection and thought: that is to say, of spiritual remoteness: so that by a nation far removed from the Christian world, they can only mean a political constitution so distinct from that which prevails in Christendom as permits a larger access of spiritual life to the people, a larger influx of the spirit of human fellowship. Undoubtedly at the time Swedenborg was enjoying his instructive and pleasant commerce with angelic spirits, we were still European colonies: but no one familiar with our colonial history has here to learn, that the principle of popular sovereignty which constitutes our political difference from the polities of the old world, germinated as vigorously in the colonial conscience, as it has since flowered and fructified in the national one. What separates us *toto cælo* from Europe is our constitutional recognition of popular sovereignty, so that we have absolutely no mediation left between us and God, absolutely no priesthood and no royalty. The priest is now clearly seen, by every one of the least spiritual culture, never to have been anything else than a symbol or figure of the unrecognized Divine good in the universe of man's heart; and the king to have been only a figure of the unrecognized Divine truth in the universe of man's understanding. No doubt a dense shadow of Europe has managed to project itself upon our soil. The intellectual ignorance we have been under with respect to our proper destiny which is exclusively social, has led us in great part to imagine ourselves little more than a legitimate spawn of European institutions, popularly modified; so that a federative Church, made up of any number of

competitive and reciprocally wrangling sects, and a federative Polity, made up of any number of competitive and reciprocally hostile States, have had power to lift their bewildered heads, and obscure for a time to the popular consciousness its own rigidly humanitary temper and aims.

Do I complain of these things? God forbid! For otherwise we must have lacked that Providential impulsion in our rear, which seems to have been necessary to counterbalance our habitual poltroonery, and call forth our latent manhood to the extent of making us willing at last to envisage, intellectually, the possibilities of our great destiny. If we had not reproduced in our shabby futile way the European experience, or tried for ourselves what could be made of Churchman and Statesman, we should never have known the abysses of infamy and imbecility they officially include, and might still be looking back with regret to the flesh-pots of Europe. We have now forever ended that folly. We have tried Church and State under fairer auspices — so far as any embarrassment from routine or precedent is concerned — than they have ever enjoyed before: and whither have they brought us? If you demand the exact measure of their significance, look around you. For it is these men alone, our most respected Churchman and Statesman, who have brought us at last as a people to mutual slaughter.

Of course we inherited Slavery. It preëxisted in the country, always patiently soliciting God's final judgment and disposal of it. But God is most truly the Lord, and is consequently unable to do anything in the way of abating iniquity upon the earth, except in concurrence with the nature He has forever associated to His own. All evil has its birth from the heart of man, and it can be permanently put away therefore only by a spiritual operation of God in the heart of mankind, disposing us freely to loathe and renounce our habitual injustice and covetousness. Thus the process of God's

judgment against evil is always gradual no doubt, being contingent altogether upon the enlargement of man's social conscience; but there was no need that it should ever be vindictive, or assume the gigantic dimensions it has now assumed in the slaveholders' rebellion, except what arose from our pig-headed conceit and obduracy. Our people were innocent of the introduction of slavery. God had no quarrel with them therefore in regard to its existence. He needed of course their consent and concurrence to put it definitively away from human sight; and he invited such consent and concurrence by the medium of the Moses and the Joshua who had led them out of European bondage. Accordingly the people had only to impose a brief repression upon their baser instincts, by deliberately affixing a prospective period to the existence of the curse, in order to insure its peaceful decease, and a subsequent career to themselves of unlimited social progress and order.

What prevented, and alone prevented, this issue? Was it the invention of the cotton-gin, as I have heard some of our very blackest sheep affirm? What nonsense! The cotton-gin might have been invented fifty times over, inflaming the wildest cupidity of hearts without mercy, and yet no stain would have come upon our national life and character, had not our churchmen and statesmen remorselessly disowned what little honesty had ever sanctified their several callings. They were the recognized and accepted interpreters of the popular conscience. The clergyman was there for no other purpose under heaven than to avouch God's unsullied altar in the instincts of the popular heart. The politician was there for no other purpose than to maintain God's omnipotent throne in the convictions of the popular understanding. And consequently if these men — especially the former — had not been both ready and eager to betray their majestic trust: if, armed with the authority which our traditional conscience still conceded to their office, they had even once manfully confronted

the waves of cupidity which were deluging the popular conscience, and said in the name of God, Peace, be still! the waves and the sea would have hastened to obey them. But no, they greedily bent themselves to inflame the lust of the commercial bosom; the one, by devoutly perverting the letter of God's word to the sanctification of slavery; the other, by blackening the name and menacing the life of every clean and honest man in the land, whose eyes had been Divinely opened to discern, and whose tongue had been Divinely loosed to scourge, our prevalent clerical hypocrisy, and the blatant political effrontery which was consequent upon it. All that was grovelling and beastly in the uncultivated popular heart smelt at and snuffed up the monstrous temptation. But the beast still owned a master; and if that master had not himself cordially abjured his mastership, and voluntarily descended to the beast's own level, accepting henceforth its alliance and guidance, its fierce red jaws would have smacked and watered to no purpose, its rampant libidinous tail have drooped, at once, submissive to the dust.

It fills me then with unspeakable adoration of the majestic Providence in whose hand are all the ways of men, that our churchmen and statesmen have thus been allowed utterly to play out the latent and puny treachery to God and man with which their office has from the beginning of history been inwardly full; and that we are henceforth delivered from all pretence of any further human mediation between the most High and the humblest of His creatures. We have henceforth but one mediator, who by one offering has forever purified the consciences of all who come unto God by him; and we shall no longer tolerate any delegation of his authority. The clergyman or the politician who seeks our praise in the future, has but one way to achieve it; that is, he must overcome by his proper humanitary genius the righteous odium into which his office has popularly and irrevocably sunken. He will derive no

consideration from his office, not one particle: but will owe it all to the strict fidelity with which he personally reproduces and reflects God's vital sanctity and power in the realm of human affection and human thought. We have no longer, so far as the distinctively popular intelligence is concerned, any belief in a Deity out of the conditions of human nature, or incommensurate with its powers and possibilities: at all events we can afford to be extremely indifferent to such a deity: and we insist therefore by an infallible instinct of God's living presence in our bosoms, that we shall henceforth permit no religious ministry, which does not before all things else authenticate God's great gospel of PEACE ON EARTH AND GOOD WILL TOWARDS ALL MANKIND, nor any political ministry, which does not give Freedom the sway —the universal sway—in human affairs, which has been hitherto usurped by diabolic Force.

The slaveholders' rebellion, with all the blood and all the treasure it has cost, is yet a cheap purchase of these magnificent results; because they are spiritual and produce fruit to eternity. The two things that separated between God and man, forever fossilizing the latter's conscience, and deadening the former's quickening power, were the priest and the policeman, the Church and the State. These two things have now become stigmatized with such an ineffaceable Divine contempt and oblivion, that they will no longer retard but only promote the advent of our social destiny. Before the rebellion broke out, almost every name of honor in our politics, our literature, and even our science, cringed meekly to the slaveholder's lash, and kissed the feet of his insolent and vulgar rapacity. There was to be sure a Fremont, who was a candidate for popular favor; there were a Sumner and a Seward in the Senate; a Wilson, a Giddings, and others in the House; none of whom had bowed the knee to Baal. But these men were never in office, because absolutely no man had any chance of political distinction who did not abjectly

truckle to Slavery. Literature boasted the generous warmth of Lowell and Whittier, and lent her noble Emerson and well-beloved Curtis to the sacred cause. Greeley and Bryant in the secular press won immortal laurels by their fervid constancy to truth, while Bacon and Leavitt and Thompson performed the same thankless service in the religious press. But as a general thing, politics, literature, and the press were utterly subsidized, and no sign of a better day, but only of an ever-deepening night, met the eye until the assault upon Fort Sumter. What an enormous — what a Divine change — has flashed upon the country since that auspicious hour! What a stifling air had we breathed before! With what a bellying volume our lungs now unreef themselves to catch every breath of God's awakening gale! And as yet two years have barely passed!

But there was a lower deep of degradation possible, and to this of course our clergy were bound to descend, because the previous elevation of their position gave a deeper impetus to their fall. Our politicians, our *literateurs*, our men of science, kissed the feet of the slave-holding aristocracy, and had what reward they craved. But our clergymen almost to a man servilely kissed the feet of these degraded men of politics, literature, and science, and derided the pretension of men to discover any law of God which such caitiffs as these had not previously ratified. That is to say our clergy almost to a man denied the spirituality of God's law, and insisted upon shutting up man's allegiance to the bare letter of any constitution which human wit might fashion, and human lust falsify. Dr. Channing stood erect, Dr. Pierpont, Dr. Cheever, Theodore Parker, Theodore Weld, Henry Ward Beecher, and many others: but it cost them all their ecclesiastical consideration and consequence to do so. They declared in the face of their truculent and for the time triumphant fellow-sectaries, that the Lord was as actively current, though in invisible form, in our affairs as He had ever been in those of

old Jewry: that He was indeed far more bitterly profaned in spirit by our persistent Christian inhumanity to the humblest victim of oppression in the land, than He was ever profaned in the flesh by all the ignominy and injury which Jew or Roman had inflicted upon Him. So spiritual and living a sensibility to the Divine name as this could not help calling forth, and making visible to every eye, the deep-seated practical unbelief and atheism of the church; and these men accordingly have incurred at the hands of our more obscene religious newspapers, an acrimony of vituperation and a malignity of hatred, which Mr. Garrison and Mr. Phillips, who are respectively the impetuous Peter and the eloquent Paul of the Abolition apostolate, could hardly fail to envy.[1]

Immortal honor then befall these stainless names, and all which have since been as stainlessly associated with them, our Andrews and Butlers and Bankses and Rosecranses and Mitchells and Hunters and Henrys and Vintons and Mitchells and Brownsons and Burnsides and Dixes and Wrights and Owens and Johnsons and Stantons, and whomsoever else of whatever name whose manhood — in this majestic spiritual assize of God where He is subtly and silently dividing His sheep from the goats — has kept them from descending to the

[1] Though I have a great respect for the "Abolitionists" personally, based upon their thorough truth and manliness as contrasted with the sordid and skulking crew who have always formed the bulk of their assailants, I yet have never been able to justify philosophically their attitude towards slavery. They attack slavery as an institution rather than as a principle; that is, on moral grounds rather than spiritual; making it primarily a wrong done the slave rather than one done the master: and hence wound the self-love of the latter and exasperate his cupidity, in place of conciliating his good will, and enlightening his understanding. The practical working of the institution has been on the whole, I doubt not, favorable to the slave in a moral point of view; it is only the master who from recent developments seems to have been degraded by it, spiritually, out of every lineament of manhood.

level of the swine! These are they to whom, whether they have ever outwardly invoked His name or not, the king spiritually says: *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom of God prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; sick, and ye visited me; in bondage, and ye came unto me.* And these are they who, with all like them, in unfeigned amazement to learn that they were thus inwardly honoring Him whom they never outwardly so much as thought of, when they were simply obeying the instincts of universal justice in their own souls, exclaim: *Lord! when saw we thee hungry and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink; when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in; naked and clothed thee; or when saw we thee sick or in prison, and came unto thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* See Matthew, xxv., 31–46.

This, in brief, is why I think a new and Divine style of manhood, a new because a living church, is ripe for inauguration upon this continent, namely: that when our pretended priests proved recreant to every Godward —and our pretended politicians to every manward— obligation, the people themselves were so inwardly moved as to resume their betrayed sovereignty, and to affirm with such an emphasis the non-extension of slavery, as to precipitate the slaveholder's rebellion, and by so doing put a speedy end both to slavery itself, and to the conjoint sacerdotal and political profligacy by which alone its existence had been guaranteed.

NOTE J. Page 480.

Maternity is as yet a comparative qualification with every woman; no one being absolutely qualified for it, nor capable of becoming so until the advent of a true society among men shall have insured to mothers themselves fit conditions of nativity. No woman is positively qualified for maternity, *i. e.* able to do physical justice to the fruit of her womb, who is not herself in previous harmony with the Common Mother of whose grander benignity she is but a particular form, but a special type or image. And manifestly no woman can ever attain to that harmony, until society shall have first come to proper self-consciousness, and done her obvious duty to all her members, by insuring them conditions of climate, of food, of clothing, of lodging, of active occupation and passive enjoyment, which shall be suitable to their natural genius, and yield them consequently a physical health equal to every conceivable exigency of the soul. In like manner no father is absolutely fit to become a father or to do justice to the spiritual personality of his child, who is not previously qualified for his function by a heart of equal love, and a mind of equal truth, to his fellow-man. And none of us is capable of these things so long as our private individuality is biased, belittled and bedeviled by an enforced deference to merely ecclesiastical and political institutions, which however they once may have imperfectly *represented* a true society, yet never constituted it, and now no longer do even thus much, but on the contrary foully *mis*-represent, embarrass and obstruct it.

In a word the putative mother of the child is only a *quasi* mother, hiding it from light and air in her tender bosom until its soul shall have aggrandized its material bulk sufficiently to bring it under the care of the common mother, to be dandled thenceforth on her impartial knees, and nurtured to manhood upon the milk of her im-

perial breasts. In like manner the specific father finds in every case his narrow spiritual paternity widening into that of society, or what at least stands temporarily for society and represents it, namely, the current ecclesiastical and political life of the community: so that the child's immediate parents turn out abjectly mediate ones after all, even ludicrously incapable of any true responsibility towards it, simply because they are blind unconscious instruments of a paternity and maternity infinitely more wise, more tender and more efficient.

Scotus tho't God should be viewed as the Divine, not the Infinite: for though infinite, infinity could be thought of as an attribute of some thing else than God, which Divinity could not—

THE END.

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